Rashi on Exodus
רש"י על שמות
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-Rashi Chumash, Metsudah Publications, 2009
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Rashi on Exodus

Chapter 1

Verse 1

ואלה שמות בני ישראל NOW THESE ARE THE NAMES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL — Although scripture has already enumerated them by name whilst they were living, when they went down into Egypt (Genesis 46:8-27), it again enumerates them when it tells us of their death, thus showing how dear they were to God — that they are compared to the stars which also God brings out and brings in by number and name when they cease to shine, as it is said, (Isaiah 40:26) "He bringeth out their host by number, He calleth them all by name" (Exodus Rabbah 1:3; Tanchuma Yashan 1:1:2).

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

ויוסף היה במצרים lit., AND JOSEPH WAS IN EGYPT — But were not he and his sons included in the seventy? What, then, is this statement intended to tell us? Do we not know that he was in Egypt? But its purpose is to inform you of Joseph's righteousness: this is the same Joseph who tended his father's sheep; this is the same Joseph who was in Egypt and became king there, and yet he remained steadfast in his righteousness, and the change from a humble position to exalted rank in Egypt caused no deterioration in his character (cf. Sifrei האזינו; Exodus Rabbah 1:7).

Verse 6

Verse 7

That there women did not miscarry and did not die when they were young. וישרצו AND THEY INCREASED ABUNDANTLY (more lit., they swarmed, a word used of the prolificness of reptiles) — they bore six children at one birth (the six words from פרו to מאד suggest or imply the number six) (Midrash Tanchuma, Shemot 5).

Verse 8

ויקם מלך חדש NOW THERE AROSE A NEW KING — Rab and Samuel (two Amoraim or Talmudical teachers) differed in their interpretation of these words. One said that he was really a new king; the other said that it was the same king but he made new edicts (Sotah 11a).
אשר לא ידע WHO KNEW NOT [JOSEPH] — he comported himself as though he did not know him (Sotah 11a).

Verse 9

Verse 10

הבה נתחכמה COME ON, LET US DEAL WISELY — Wherever הבה is used it has the meaning of preparing oneself and making oneself ready to do a particular matter; it signifies as much as: get yourself ready for this (cf. Rashi on Genesis 11:4 and Rashi on Genesis 38:16).
נתחכמה לו LET US DEAL WISELY WITH THEM (לו more lit., with him) — i. e. with the people (the word לו, which is singular, refers to עם used in the preceding verse in the phrase עם בני ישראל): let us consider wisely what to do to them. Our Rabbis, however, explained that the singular לו refers to God, and that the words mean: "let us use our wisdom against Him who would show Himself Israel's deliverer, by sentencing them to death by water, since He has already sworn that He will not bring another flood upon the world, and He will therefore be unable to punish us 'measure for measure', as is His way.")
ועלה מן הארץ AND HE WILL GO UP OUT OF THE LAND, against our will. Our Rabbis explained that they spoke like a person who is pronouncing a curse against himself but attaches the curse to others (because he does not wish to use an ominous expression of himself), so that it is as though Scripture wrote "and we shall have to go up out of the land" and they will take possession of it (Sotah 11a).

Verse 11

עליו [THEREFORE THEY DID SET] OVER THEM (עליו over him) i. e. over the people.
מסים has the meaning of tribute (מס), a forced levy of labour, so that שרי מסים are the officers who exact the tribute of labour from them. And what was this tribute? That they should build store-cities for Pharaoh.
למען ענותו בסבלותם TO AFFLICT THEM WITH THEIR BURDENS — i. e. the burdens of the Egyptians.
ערי מסכנות — Translate this as the Targum does: CITIES WHICH ARE PLACES FOR TREASURES; similarly we have, (Isaiah 22:15) "Go, get thes unto this steward (הסוכן)" — the treasurer appointed over the stores (Exodus Rabbah 2:1).
את פתם ואת רעמסס PITHOM AND RAMESES — These cities already existed but were not adapted originally for this purpose; now they strengthened them and fortified them to serve as store-cities.

Verse 12

וכאשר יענו אתו AND AS THEY AFFLICTED THEM — In whatsoever matter it was that they set their hearts upon afflicting them so was the heart of the Holy One, blessed be He, set upon multiplying them and making them grow apace.
כן ירבה signifies: so they multiplied and so they grew apace (i. e. God's determination was carried out, the imperfect tenses of the verbs denoting the continuance of the increase and growth). This is the real meaning; but there is a Midrashic explanation of these imperfect tenses: The Holy spirit (God) said this: You say פן ירבה, "lest they increase", but "I" say כן ירבה, "thus will they assuredly increase" (Sotah 11a).
ויקצו the word means, THEY WERE WEARY OF THEIR LIVES. Our Rabbis explained that it means that they were as thorns (קוצים) in their eyes (cf. Sotah 11a).

Verse 13

בפרך means with hard service which crushes (מפרכת) the body and shatters it (cf. Sotah 11b).

Verse 14

Verse 15

למילדת (the Piel participle) — This is synonymous with מוליד (the Hiphil participle, and both denote the women who assist the mother in bringing the child to birth). But some verbs are used in forms of a light conjugation (i. e. one which has no strong Dagesh as a characteristic) or in forms of a strong conjugation (one that has such a Dagesh), as e. g., שׁוֹבֵר (Kal) and מְשַׁבֵּר (Piel); דּוֹבֵר (Kal) and מְדַבֵּר (Piel). both having the same meaning; similarly here we may have מוֹלִיד (the Hiphil — without a strong Dagesh) or מְיַלֵּד (the Piel), both signifying one who helps to bring to birth.
שפרה SHIPHRAH — This was Jochebed; she bore this additional name because she used to put the babe after its birth into good physical condition (משפרת) by the care she bestowed upon it (Sotah 11b).
פועה PUAH — This was Miriam, and she bore this additional name because she used to Call aloud and speak and croon to the babe just as women do who soothe a child when it is crying (Sotah 11b).
פועה has the meaning of crying aloud, as (Isaiah 42:14) "I will cry (אפעה) like a travailing woman".

Verse 16

בילדכן WHEN YE DO THE OFFICE OF A MIDWIFE — This word (the Piel) has the same force as בהולידכן (the Hiphil): when you assist them to give birth.
על האבנים UPON THE STOOLS — the seat for the woman in the act of childbirth; in another passage (Isaiah 37:3) Scripture terms it מַשְׁבֵּר. Similar is, (Jeremiah 18:3) "He was at work on the אבנים" — the place of the vessels of (being produced by) the craftsmanship of the potter.
אם בן הוא וגו IF IT BE A SON etc. — He was particular only about the male children because his astrologers had told him that there was to be born to a Hebrew woman a son who would become their deliverer (Exodus Rabbah 1:18).
והיא has the same meaning as ותחיה THEN SHE SHALL LIVE.

Verse 17

ותחיין את הילדים This may mean THEY MAINTAINED THE CHILDREN IN LIFE — they provided them with food (Sotah 11b). The Targum renders ותחיין the first time it occurs (i. e. in this verse) by וקימא (which means, "and they — the women — preserved the babes"). and the second time (Exodus 1:18) by וקימתן (which means, "and ye women have preserved etc.") The Targum is able to distinguish between the two meanings of this word, but this cannot be done in Hebrew because in the Hebrew language in the case of fem. plur. this word and similar forms (ending in נָה or ן) are used in the sense of "they did something" (3rd person) and in the sense of "ye did something" (2nd person). For example: (Exodus 2:19) "And they (the daughters of Jethro) said, (וַתֹּאמַרְנָה) "An Egyptian man etc.", which is the past tense (the Rashi text must read here עָבַר לשון) (imperf. with Vau conv.), just as one would use וַיֹּאמְרוּ if one were speaking of men; (Jeremiah 54:25) "Ye women have spoken (ותדברנה) with your mouths", having the same meaning as דברתן, and corresponding to ותדברו when used of men; (Ezekiel 13:19) "And ye (women) have profaned Me (ותחללנה) among My people" which is a past tense, the same as חללתן corresponding to ותחללו when used of men.

Verse 18

Verse 19

כי חיות הנה signifies they are just as skilful as midwives. The Aramaic for מילדות, midwives, is חיתא (hence the term חיות in this verse). Our Rabbis, however, (taking this word in the sense of animals) gave the following explanation (Sotah 11b): they have been compared to the beasts of the field which do not require the help of midwives. And where are they compared to animals? (Genesis 49:9) "Judah is a young lion"; (Genesis 27) "Benjamin is a wolf that leareth"; (Deuteronomy 33:17) "Joseph is the firstling of his ox"; (Genesis 49:21) "Naphtali is a hind sent forth". As for the ancestors of those tribes about whom such a comparison is not expressly written Scripture implicitly includes them in the several blessings bestowed upon their brothers, (and thus they also are compared, as their brothers, to animals), for Scripture states, (Genesis 49:28) "And he blessed them etc." (cf. Rashi on these words). Then, again, it is written, (Ezekiel 19:2) "How was thy mother a lioness!" (The prophet is addressing the princes of Israel as the representatives of the people, and by the term "thy mother" means the progenitors of the nation; the chapter proceeds to speak of the mother's offspring as "whelps").

Verse 20

וַיֵּיטֶב means HE DID GOOD TO THEM. — The following is the difference between certain forms in a word (verb) whose root is two letters when one prefixes ו and י to them: when it intends to express the meaning "and he caused someone or something to do a particular action" (i. e. the 3rd masc. sing, imperf. Hiphil with Vau conversive), the י has the vowel Tzéré which is what we call Kametz Katan, as, (in this verse) "And God dealt well (וַיֵּיטֶב) with the midwives" (to Rashi the root it טב; we take it as יטב); (Lamentations 2:5) "וַיַּרְב for the daughter of Judah [mourning]" i. e. He increased (made great) the mourning; (root רב; we take it as רבה). Similarly (II Chronicles 36:20) "וַיַּגְל the remnant" which occurs in connection with Nebuzaradon, i. e. he caused the remnant to be exiled; (Judges 15:4) וַיָּפֶן tail to tail", i. e. he turned the tails one towards the other (more lit., he caused one tail to turn to the other) — all these express the meaning "he caused others to do something" (i. e.

they are of the Hiphil conjugation). When, however, it speaks in the sense of "and he did something" (3rd masc. sing, imperf. Kal with Vau conv.), the י has the vowel Chirik. For example, (Leviticus 10:20) "וַיִּיטַב in his eyes" — this means, "it was good". Similarly (in this verse) the people", i. e. the people became many; (2 Kings 25:21) "וַיִּגָל Judah", i. e. Judah became an exile; (2:12) "וַיִּפֶן this way and that way", i. e. he turned this way and that way. Do not answer me (do not raise an objection) by quoting the words וַיֵּלֶךְ and וַיֵּשֶׁב and וַיֵּרֶד and וַיֵּצֵא (saying that these verbal forms also have ו and י prefixed and the י has the vowel Tzéré and yet they are Kal, not Hiphil forms), because these are not of the same class of verbs as those above-mentioned, for the י is part of the root in them — in יֵלֵךְ and יֵשֵׁב and יֵרֵד and יֵצֵא, the י is a third root letter in each of these.
ויטב אלהים למילדת THEREFORE GOD DEALT WELL WITH THE MIDWIVES — What was the good He dealt out to them? The next verse gives the reply to this —

Verse 21

ויעש להם בתים HE MADE THEM HOUSES — houses (dynasties) of the priesthood and the Levites and of royalty which are all termed בתים, "houses", as it is said, (1 Kings 9:1) "and Solomon built the house of the Lord and the house of the king": "the house of the Lord" i. e. a dynasty of priests and Levites — from Jochebed (Shifrah); and "the house of the king", i. e. a royal dynasty — from Miriam (Puah), just as it is stated in Treatise Sotah 11b.

Verse 22

לכל עמו This may be translated AND PHARAOH GAVE COMMAND REGARDING ALL (לכל) HIS PEOPLE — Regarding them, too, he made a decree (Sotah 12a). For on the day when Moses was born his astrologers said to him, "To-day their deliverer has been born, but we know not whether he is born of an Egyptian father or of an Israelite; but we see by our astrological art that he will ultimately suffer misfortune through water". Pharaoh therefore made a decree that day regarding the Egyptians also, as it is said here, "Every son that is born [ye shall cast into the river]", and it is not stated "[every son] who is born to the Hebrews". They (the astrologers), however, were not aware that Moses was ultimately to suffer misfortune through the waters of Meribah and not through the waters of the Nile (Exodus Rabbah 1:18; Sotah 12a; cf. also Rashi on Numbers 20:13).

Chapter 2

Verse 1

ויקח את בת לוי AND HE HAD TAKEN TO WIFE A DAUGHTER OF LEVI — He had lived apart from her in consequence of Pharaoh's decree that the children should, on their birth, be drowned. Now he took her back and entered into a second marriage with her, and she also physically became young again. For really she was then 130 years old — for she was born "between the walls" when they were about to enter Egypt (cf. Rashi on Genesis 46:15) and they (the Israelites) remained there 210 years, and when they left Egypt Moses was 80 years old; consequently when she became pregnant with him she was 130 years old — and yet Scripture calls her בת לוי a young daughter of Levi (Sota 12a; Bava Batra 119b).

Verse 2

כי טוב הוא THAT HE WAS GOODLY — When he was born the whole house became filled with light (Sotah 12a).

Verse 3

ולא יכלה עוד הצפינו AND SHE COULD NO LONGER CONCEAL HIM, because the Egyptians calculated the period from when he (Amram) took her back. She, however, bore him after a term of six months and one day — for a woman who gives birth to a child in the seventh month may do so in incomplete months (i. e. the seventh month of pregnancy may not be completed) (Niddah 38b) — and they (the Egyptians) made enquiry regarding her at the end of nine months (the normal term of pregnancy, but in this case three months after the child's birth; therefore "she could no longer conceal him").
גמא PAPER-REED — In the language of the Mishna it is called גמי (Shabbat 78a), and in old French junc. It is a flexible substance that offers resistance to the pressure of both soft and hard things (Sotah 12a).
בחמר ובזפת — with pitch (זפת) outside, but with slime (חמר) inside, in order that that righteous child might not smell the disagreeable odour of the pitch (Sotah 12a).
ותשם בסוף AND SHE PUT IT IN THE FLAGS — It (סוף) has the same meaning as אגם. old French rosel. Another example of the word is (Isaiah 19:6) "And reeds and flags (סוף) shall wither".

Verse 4

Verse 5

לרחץ על היאר — Invert the order of the words in this verse and then explain it: "The daughter of Pharaoh went down על היאר, by the river, לרחץ to bathe in it".
על יד היאר means BESIDE THE RIVER. Similar is (II Samuel 14:30) "See, the field of Joab is beside mine (על ידי)". It really denotes even in this sense the actual hand, for a person's hand is beside him (i. e. beside his body). Our Rabbis explained that the word הלכת "they were going" denotes dying, similar to (Genesis 25:32) "Behold I am going (הולך) to die" — they were going to their death because they attempted to prevent her from saving the child. Scripture, too, supports them in this explanation, for if this is not the meaning, why do we need that it should write "and her damsels were going"? (Scripture reports nothing as having happened because they were walking there. Why then stress this detail if it merely signifies that they were walking along the bank?).
את אמתה means her handmaid. Our Rabbis, however, explained it in the sense of hand (cf. Sotah 12b) — but according to the grammar of the Holy Language it should then have been written אַמָּתָהּ, dageshed in the מ. — And the reason why they explained את אמתה to mean את ידה "she stretched forth her hand" is because they hold that Scripture intentionally uses this term to indicate that her hand increased in length several cubits (אמה, a cubit) in order that she might more easily reach the cradle.

Verse 6

ותפתח ותראהו lit., AND SHE OPENED IT AND SHE SAW HIM — whom did she see? את הילד THE CHILD. This is the literal sense of the suffix in ותראהו. A Midrashic explanation is (taking את in the sense of "with"— she saw Him with the child): she saw the Shechina with him (cf. Sotah 12b).

והנה נער בכה lit., AND BEHOLD A BOY WEEPING — Although he was a ילד, "a child", his voice was like that of a נער, a grown up boy (cf. Sotah 12b).

Verse 7

מן העבריות OF THE HEBREWS — She expressly said, "shall I call a nurse of the Hebrews?" because she (Pharaoh's daughter) had handed him to many Egyptian women to suckle him and he had refused to take suck — this was because he was destined to hold converse with the Shechina (Exodus Rabbah 1:21 and Sotah 12b).

Verse 8

ותלך העלמה AND THE YOUNG WOMAN WENT — she went eagerly and with vigour (עלמות) like a young man (עלם) (cf. Sotah 12b).

Verse 9

היליכי (the word may be explained as a compound of two Aramaic words, הי, here is, and ליכי, that which belongs to thee — thine own) — she prophesied without knowing what she was prophesying (unconsciously she stated the actual fact) — here is thine own (Exodus Rabbah 1:21 and Sotah 12b).

Verse 10

משיתיהו The Targum renders this by שחלתיה which in the Aramaic language means drawing out. The word occurs in the Talmud, (Berakhot 8a) "as one draws out (משחל) a hair from milk", and in the Hebrew language משיתיהו might be taken to mean "I have removed him", just as, (Joshua 1:8) "it shall not depart (ימוש)"; (Numbers 14:44) "they did not depart (משו)". Thus indeed did Menachem b. Seruk classify it (i. e. he put משיתיהו under the same root as מש and משו in the verses quoted; according to him a biliteral root מש, our ע"ו root מוש). I, however, say, that it should not be classified together with מש and וימוש but that it is to be derived from משה, and that it means taking out, similar to (II Samuel 22:17) "He draws me out (ימשני) from many waters". For if it were of the same class as מש, it would not be correct to say משיתיהו (in the Kal), but הֲמִישׁוֹתִיהוּ a Hiphil form, (since this root in the Kal means "to depart" or "go away" and not "to make a thing go away"), just as from קם one says הֲקִימוֹתִי and from שב — הֲשִׁיבוֹתִי and from בא — הֲבִיאוֹתִי; or one must say מַשְׁתִּיהוּ (which is also a form from מוש used in a causative sense), just as, (Zechariah 3:9) "And I will remove (ומַשְׁתִּי) the iniquity of that land". But מָשִׁיתִי can only be derived from a word whose verbal form has a ה as a root letter at the end of the word, as e. g., משה and בנה and עשה and צוה and פנה. When it wishes to say in regard to these verbs, "I have done so-and-so" (a Kal), a י takes the place of the ה, as in בָּנִיתִי and עָשִׂיתִי and צִוִּיתִי.

Verse 11

ויגדל משה AND MOSES WAS GROWN — But has it not already been written, (Exodus 2:10) "And the child grew"? Rabbi Judah the son of Eloai said: the first time it refers to growth in stature, the second time to greatness, — that Pharaoh appointed him to have charge over his palace (Tanchuma Yashan 2.2:17; cf. also Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 166:11).
וירא בסבלתם AND HE SAW THEIR BURDENS — he set his eyes and mind to share in their distress. (Exodus Rabbah 1:27)
איש מצרי AN EGYPTIAN MAN — This was one of the taskmasters appointed over the Israelite officers and he used to rouse them from their beds at cock-

crow that they might proceed to their work (Exodus Rabbah 1:28 and Leviticus Rabbah 32:4).
מכה איש עברי SMITING A HEBREW MAN — beating and flogging him. The latter was the husband of Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri (see Leviticus 24:11), and the Egyptian taskmaster had set his fancy upon her. During the night he compelled him (her husband) to rise and made him leave the house. He, however, returned, entered the house and forced his attentions upon the woman, she believing it was her husband. The man returned and became aware of what had happened, and when the Egyptian perceived that he was aware of it he beat him and flogged him the whole day long (Exodus Rabbah 1:28).

Verse 12

ויפן כה וכה AND HE TURNED THIS WAY AND THAT WAY — he saw what he had done to him in the house and what he had done to him in the field (outside the house. viz., the beating to which he had subjected him) (Exodus Rabbah 1.28). But according to the literal meaning it must be explained in its ordinary sense: he turned this way and that way.
וירא כי אין איש AND HE SAW THAT THERE WAS NO MAN destined to issue from him, who would become an adherent of Israel's religion (Exodus Rabbah 1:29; cf. Targum Jonathan on Exodus 2:12).

Verse 13

שני אנשים עברים TWO MEN OF THE HEBREWS — viz., Dathan and Abiram (Nedarim 64b); it was they, too, who left over some of the manna (Exodus Rabbah 1:29).
נצים means quarelling.
למה תכה lit., WHEREFORE WILT THOU SMITE — Although he had not yet smitten him he is termed here רשע wicked, because he had merely raised his hand against him (Sanhedrin 58b).
רעך THY FELLOW (the word denotes one who is the equal of another) — who is as wicked as yourself (Exodus Rabbah 1:29).

Verse 14

מי שמך לאיש WHO MADE THEE A PERSONAGE (lit., a man), and you are yet only a boy (Midrash Tanchuma, Shemot 10).
הלהרגני אתה אמר lit. WILT THOU SPEAK IN ORDER TO SLAY ME — From this we may learn that he had killed him by the mere utterance of the "Shem Hamephorash" (Midrash Tanchuma, Shemot 10; Exodus Rabbah 1:30).
ויירא משה AND MOSES FEARED — Explain it in its literal sense: he was afraid of Pharaoh. A Midrashic explanation is: he felt distressed because he saw that there were wicked men among the Israelites — common informers. He said: Since this is so (מעתה), perhaps they are not worthy to be delivered from bondage (Midrash Tanchuma, Shemot 10).
אכן נודע הדבר SURELY THE THING IS KNOWN — Explain it in its literal sense: the fact that I have killed the Egyptian is known. A Midrashic explanation is: now there is known to me that matter about which I have been puzzled — how has Israel sinned more than all the seventy nations, that they should be oppressed by this crushing servitude? But now I see that they deserve this (Exodus Rabbah 1:30).

Verse 15

וישמע פרעה AND PHARAOH HEARD IT — they (Dathan and Abiram) slandered (denounced) him (Exodus Rabbah 1:31).
ויבקש להרג את משה AND HE SOUGHT TO SLAY MOSES — He handed him over to the executioner to slay him, but the sword proved powerless against him. It

is to this that Moses referred when he said, (18:4) "And He delivered me from Pharaoh's sword" (see Mechilta יתרו and Exodus Rabbah 1:31).
[וישב בארץ מדין AND HE ABODE IN THE LAND OF MIDIAN — the word וישב means he stayed there, as (Genesis 37:1) "And Jacob abode (וישב)".]
וישב על הבאר — Here the word וישב has the meaning of sitting down. He learnt to sit at the well from Jacob whose marriage had been brought about by means of a well (Exodus Rabbah 1:32).

Verse 16

ולכהן מדין THE PRIEST OF MIDIAN — כהן signifies the chief amongst them (see Targ. Onkelos and Mekhilta יתרו); he had abandoned the idol-worship to which they were addicted and they banished him, driving him away from them (Exodus Rabbah 1:32).
את הרהטים THE GUTTERS — the troughs for the currents of water which are excavated in the ground.

Verse 17

ויגרשם AND THEY DROVE THEM AWAY, because of the banishment into which their father and his family had been driven (Midrash Tanchuma, Shemot 11).

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

למה זה עזבתן — WHEREFORE HAVE YE LEFT [THE MAN]? — He recognised that he was of the offspring of Jacob because for him (Moses), as for Jacob, the water had risen in the well at his approach (Midrash Tanchuma, Shemot 11)
ויאכל לחם THAT HE MAY EAT BREAD — perhaps he will marry one of you — just as you say, (Genesis 39:6) "except the bread which he did eat" (cf. Rashi on this verse, where the word "bread" is explained as a euphemism) (Midrash Tanchuma, Shemot 11).

Verse 21

ויואל — Translate this as the Targum does: AND HE WAS WILLING. Similar are: (Judges 19:6) "Be content (הואל), I pray thee, and tarry all night"; (Joshua 7:7) "would that we had been content (הואלנו)"; (Genesis 18:31) "I am content (הואלתי) to speak". A Midrashic explanation is that it has the sense of taking an oath (אלה), so that it should be rendered, "And Moses pledged himself by an oath to remain with the man" — he swore to him that he would not stir from Midian save by his permission (cf. Exodus 4:18) (Nedarim 65a).

Verse 22

Verse 23

[ויהי בימים הרבים ההם AND IT CAME TO PASS DURING THOSE MANY DAYS during which Moses was sojourning in Midian, וימת מלך מצרים THAT THE KING OF

EGYPT DIED, and the Israelites felt the need of help; and therefore ומשה היה רעה "And Moses fed the flock" and help came through him. For this reason these chapters are placed in juxtaposition].
וימת מלך מצרים THE KING OF EGYPT DIED — he became stricken with leprosy (and therefore may be spoken of as dead; cf. Numbers 12:12), and he used to slaughter Israelitish children and bathe in their blood as a cure for his disease (cf. Targum Jonathan and Exodus Rabbah 1:34).

Verse 24

נאקתם means THEIR CRY. Similar is, (Job 24:12) "from out of the populous city men groan (ינאקו)".
את בריתו את אברהם — The words את אברהם, are the same as עם אברהם, with Abraham (i. e. the word את means "with", whilst in the preceding phrase, את בריתו, it is the sign of the accusative).

Verse 25

וידע אלהים AND GOD KNEW — He directed His heart to them and did not hide His eyes from them.

Chapter 3

Verse 1

אחר המדבר [HE LED THE SHEEP] BEHIND THE DESERT — in order to keep them away from private property (גָּזֵל i. e. things which can be appropriated only as the result of "robbery") — that they should not graze in other people's fields (Exodus Rabbah 2:3).
אל הר האלהים TO THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD — Scripture so names it with reference to what happened there in the future (Sifrei on Deuteronomy 1:24).

Verse 2

בלבת אש means IN A FLAME OF FIRE, i. e. in the very heart of (לב) the fire. Similarly is לב used of inanimate objects in: (Deuteronomy 4:11) "in the heart of (לב) heaven"; (II Samuel 18:14) "in the midst of (לב) the terebinth". Do not be puzzled by the ת, although the ordinary word for heart, לב. does not require the suffix ת in the construct form, because we have another example of this form, viz., (Ezekiel 16:30) "how weak is thy heart (לבתך)".
מתוך הסנה OUT OF THE MIDST OF A BUSH (a thornbush) — and not from any other tree, in accordance with the idea (Psalms 91:15) "I will be with him in trouble" (Midrash Tanchuma, Shemot 14).
אֻכָּל means DEVOURED, eaten. It is of the same grammatical form as, (Deuteronomy 21:3) "which hath not been wrought with (עֻבַּד)"; (Genesis 3:23) "whence he was taken (לֻקַּח):

Verse 3

אָסוּרָה means I WILL TURN ASIDE from here in order that I may approach thither.

Verse 4

Verse 5

שׁל means DRAW OFF and take off. It is of the same root as, (Numbers 19:5) "and the iron-head slippeth off (נשׁל) from the handle"; (Deuteronomy 28:40) "for thine olives shall drop off (ישׁל)".
אדמת קדשׁ הוא the place IS HOLY GROUND (i. e. the masculine pronoun הוא refers to the word המקום and not to אדמת, which is feminine).

Verse 6

Verse 7

כי ידעתי את מכאביו FOR I KNOW THEIR SORROWS — The verb has the same meaning as in (Exodus 2:25) "and God knew", signifying as much as: for I have set my heart upon noticing and understanding their sorrows, and I have not hidden my eyes from their distress, nor have I stopped my ears against their cry.

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

ועתה לך ואשׁלחך אל פרעה COME NOW, THEREFORE, AND I WILL SEND THEE UNTO PHARAOH — And if you ask "What will this avail?" והוצא את עמי AND BRING FORTH MY PEOPLE — your words will prove effective and you will bring them forth from there.

Verse 11

מי אנכי WHO AM I? — Of what importance am I that I should speak with monarchs?
וכי אוציא את בני ישׂראל AND THAT I SHOULD BRING FORTH THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL — and even if I am of sufficient importance for this, how has Israel merited that a miracle should be wrought for them and that I should bring them forth from Egypt?

Verse 12

ויאמר כי אהיה עמך AND HE SAID, BECAUSE I WILL BE WITH THEE — He answered his first question first and his last question last: as regards what thou hast said, "Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh?" i. e. of what importance am I to speak with kings, I reply, it is not an undertaking of yours, but it is partly mine for "I" will be with thee", וזה AND THIS — i. e. the sight which thou hast witnessed in the bush, לך האות כי אנכי שׁלחתיך SHALL BE A SIGN UNTO THEE, BECAUSE (כי) "I" HAVE SENT THEE and "I" am competent to save: just as thou hast seen the bush carrying out the mission I laid upon it and it was not consumed, so go thou too on the mission I entrust to thee and thou shalt suffer no harm. And as regards thy question: What merit have the Israelites that they should go forth from Egypt? — I reply that I have a great purpose in this, My bringing them forth, for they are destined to accept the Torah upon this mountain at the expiration of three months after they leave Egypt (cf. Exodus

Rabbah 3:4). Another explanation is: כי אהיה עמך FOR I WILL BE WITH THEE and thou wilt therefore succeed, וזה AND THIS — viz., the fact that thou wilt succeed in thy mission לך האות WILL BE A SIGN UNTO THEE with respect to another promise: for I promise thee that when thou hast brought them forth from Egypt ye will serve Me upon this mountain — i. e. that ye will receive the Torah upon it. This is the merit which is an advocate for Israel. An exactly similar use of the word אות, where something that will happen in the future is to serve as an אות in regard to an event that will transpire in the more distant future we find elsewhere: (Isaiah 37:30.) "And this shall be a sign unto thee — for ye shall eat this year that which groweth of itself etc." (the passage proceeds to state that after a few years the devastated land will have regained its former fertility) — this, i. e, the fall of Sennacherib promised in the preceding section of that chapter shall be a sign to thee in respect to another promise: for your land is now barren of fruits, but I will bless that which grows of itself and the land shall bring forth fruits in abundance.

Verse 13

Verse 14

אהיה אשר אהיה I AM THAT I AM — I will be with them in this sorrow — I Who I will be with them in the subjection they will suffer at the hands of other kingdoms (Berakhot 9b). Whereupon Moses said to him: Lord of the Universe! Why should I mention to them other sorrows: they have enough with this sorrow! God replied to him: You have spoken rightly — כה תאמר THUS SHALT THOU SAY etc.… Ehyeh, "I am" — without the addition of אשר אהיה which has reference to future sorrows — has sent me unto you".

Verse 15

זה שמי לעלם THIS IS MY NAME FOR EVER — The last word is written without ו (so that it may be read לְעֻלָּם and it would mean "this is My Name which is to be concealed") to suggest: Conceal it (this Divine Name), so that it shall not be read exactly as it is written (but should be read as אדני; cf. Pesachim 50a; Exodus Rabbah 3:7).
וזה זכרי AND THIS IS MY MEMORIAL (the word may signify "the mention of Me") — He taught him how the Divine Name should be read. So, too, did David say, (Psalms 135:13) "O Lord, Thy name is for ever (שמך לעולם), O Lord, Thy memorial is throughout all generations (זכרך לדר ודר).

Verse 16

את זקני ישראל THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL, those singled out to attend meetings, (i. e. the leaders) (cf. Yoma 28b). If, however, you should say that the text means old men in the ordinary sense I ask: How was it possible for him to gather all the old men amongst a male population of 600,000?

Verse 17

Verse 18

ושמעו לקלך AND THEY SHALL HEARKEN TO THY VOICE — as soon as you will mention to them this expression (the double use of the verb פקד as in v. 16) they will hearken to your voice, for they have long had this sign as

a tradition from Jacob and Joseph that by mention of this phrase their deliverance will be brought about. Jacob said to them "And God will surely visit you", and Joseph said to them (Genesis 50:25) "God will surely visit you".
נקרה עלינו GOD HATH HAPPENED TO MEET US — The word נקרה signifies a casual meeting. Similar are: (Numbers 23:4) "And God happened to meet (ויקר) [Balaam]"; (Numbers 23:15) ואנכי אִקָּרֶה כה which means "I will be met by him yonder".
God of the Hebrews. [הָעִבְרִיִּים is written with] an additional yud as an allusion to the ten plagues. (From an old Rashi manuscript.)

Verse 19

לא יתן אתכם מלך מצרים להלך THE KING OF EGYPT WILL NOT LET YOU GO, if I do not (ולא) show him My strong hand (יד חזקה) — it is as much as to say: so long as I do not let him feel My strong hand he will not let you go.
לא יתן — Translate this as the Targum does: he will not give leave. Similar uses of נתן followed by ל with the infinitive in sense of permitting are: (Genesis 20:6) "therefore I did not permit thee (נתתיך) to touch her"; (Genesis 31:7) "And God did not permit him (נתנו) to do me evil". Still all these passages really have the sense of giving". Some explain the phrase ולא ביד חזקה to signify: "He will not permit you to go, and this will not be because his hand is strong", for (v. 20) "As soon as I stretch forth My hand I will smite the Egyptians [… and afterwards he will let you go]". And so the Targum renders it: and not on account that his power is mighty. This explanation was told me in the name of Rabbi Jacob the son of Menachem.

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

ומגרת ביתה means from that woman with whom she sojourneth in one house.
ונצלתם render it as the Targum does: and ye shall empty out Egypt. Similar are: (Exodus 12:36) "And they emptied out (וינצלו) Egypt"; (Exodus 33:6) "And the children of Israel stripped themselves (ויתנצלו) of their ornaments" The נ in it is a root-letter. Menachem ben Seruk placed it (this word ויתנצלו) in section צ (taking the root as צל not as נצל) together with, (Genesis 31:9) "And God took away (ויצל) your father's cattle", and with, (Genesis 31:16) "which God hath taken away (הציל) from our father", but his view cannot be sustained. For if the נ is not a root-letter, then seeing that it (the word ונצלתם) is vowelled with Chirik, it cannot be used in the sense of "and ye shall do something" (the active voice, which is required here since את מצרים can only be the object of the verb), but in the sense of "and ye shall have something done to you" (the passive — "Niphal"), as (Deuteronomy 28:63) "And ye shall be plucked up (וְנִסַּחְתֶּם) from off your land"; (Leviticus 26:25) "and ye shall be given (וְנִתַּתֶּם) into the hand of the enemy"; (Leviticus 17) "And ye shall be smitten (וְנִגַּפְתֶּם) before your enemies"; (Ezekiel 22:21) "And ye shall be melted (וְנִתַּכְתֶּם) in the midst thereof"; (Jeremiah 7:10) "And ye say, נִצַּלְנוּ" — which expresses the idea "we have had something done to us" (the Niphal: we have been delivered). Then again, every נ which sometimes appears in a word and sometimes is omitted, as e. g. the נ of נוגף and נושא and נותן and נושך, when the word

expresses the sense “and ye shall do something” (the Kal), it is pointed with vocal Sheva (חטף a “snatched” sound), as, for instance, (Genesis 45:19) “and ye shall bear (וּנְשָׂאתֶם) your father”; (Numbers 32:29) “And ye shall give (וּנְתַתֶּם) them the land of Gilead”; (Genesis 17:11) “And ye shall circumcise (וּנְמַלְתֶּם) the flesh of your foreskin”. Consequently I am of the opinion that this letter נ which is vowelled with a Chirik is one of the root letters, and the grammatical form of the noun of the same root is נָצוּל which is of the strong (dageshed) forms, just as דָּבוּר and כָּפוּר and לָמוּד. When, in the case of verbs formed from these roots one expresses the idea of “and ye shall do something” (active voice) the נ has the vowel Chirik (i. e. it is the Piel conjugation), as (Numbers 20:8) “And ye shall speak (וְדִבַּרְתֶּם) unto the rock”; (Ezekiel 45:20) “And ye shall atone (וְכִפַּרְתֶּם) for the house”; (Deuteronomy 11:19) “And ye shall teach (וְלִמַּדְתֶּם) them unto your children”.

Chapter 4

Verse 1

Verse 2

מזה בידך WHAT IS THAT IN THINE HAND? —The reason why the words מה זה are written here as one word is to afford the opportunity to explain it thus: on account of this (מִזֶּה) that is in thine hand thou wilt make thyself liable to punishment because thou hast harboured suspicion about worthy persons (Exodus Rabbah 3:12). The real meaning, however, is that it is a question such as one puts to his fellow: “You admit that this object in front of you is a stone?” The other replies, “Yes”. The former says, “Well, I’ll turn it into wood”.

Verse 3

ויהי לנחש AND IT BECAME A SERPENT — This was an indication to him, that he had slandered the Israelites by saying (v. 1) “But, behold they will not believe me etc.”, and that he had made the serpent’s occupation (slander) his own (cf. Genesis 3:5) (Exodus Rabbah 3:12).

Verse 4

ויחזק בו AND HE LAID HOLD OF IT —The phrase signifies “grasping” (אחז). There are many examples of it in the Scriptures: (Genesis 19:16) “The men laid hold of (וַיַּחֲזִיקוּ בְּ..) his hand”; (Deuteronomy 25:11) “And she layeth hold of (וְהַחֲזִיקָה בְּ..) his secret parts”; (I Samuel 17:35) “And I caught him by (וָאֶחֱזִקֵהוּ בְּ..) his beard”. [Wherever the root חזק in the Hiphil is followed by the preposition ב it denotes “taking hold of a thing”].

Verse 5

Verse 6

מצרעת כשלג LEPROUS AS SNOW — It is the nature of leprosy to be white, and thus we read in reference to a leper, (Leviticus 13:4) “If the bright spot be white [in the skin of his flesh]”. By this sign, too, he indicated that he had made a slanderous statement when he said, (v. 1)

"But, behold, they will not believe me". Therefore He smote him with leprosy (Exodus Rabbah 3:13) even as Miriam was so smitten for the slander she had spoken (cf. Shabbat 97a).

Verse 7

ויוצאה מחיקו והנה שבה כבשרו AND HE BROUGHT IT OUT OF HIS BOSOM AND, BEHOLD, IT HAD RETURNED AS HIS OTHER FLESH — From this we may infer that the measure of Divine good comes more quickly than the measure of the punishment He inflicts, for in the former case it does not say מחיקו after the word ויוצאה. (Shabbat 97a; Exodus Rabbah 3:13).

Verse 8

והאמינו לקל האת האחרון THEY WILL BELIEVE THE VOICE OF THE LATTER SIGN — As soon as you say to them, "On your account have I been smitten — because I uttered slander about you", they will believe you, for they are already experienced in this: that those who combine to harm them are smitten by plagues, e. g., Pharaoh and Abimelech who were punished on Sarah's account.

Verse 9

You shall take from the water of the river. He alluded to them that with the first plague He will exact retribution from their deity (Explanation: When God exacts retribution from the nations He first exacts retribution from their deity, for they had worshipped the Nile which gave them sustenance and He turned them (its waters) to blood. [This explanation is found] in an old Rashi manuscript.
והיו המים וגו׳ — Here we have the word והיו twice. It appears to me that if it was stated היאר לדם ביבשת מן והיו המים אשר תקח, I might understand it to mean that it would be turned into blood in his hand and that also when it reached the ground it would retain that state (more lit., it would be as it was). But now (as the text stands) it tells us that it would not become blood until it would come on the dry ground.

Verse 10

גם מתמול וגו׳ NEITHER FROM YESTERDAY [NOR FROM BEFORE YESTERDAY] — This teaches us that for an entire period of seven days God had been endeavouring to persuade Moses at the thornbush to go on his mission, for the terms מתמול and שלשום and מאז דברך imply three days, and the three-fold גם which is mentioned here point to three extensions of the period, making six in all, and therefore he had now reached the seventh day when he further said to him, (Exodus v. 13) "Send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send" — until God became angry with him (Exodus v. 14), and he accepted the mission (cf. Leviticus Rabbah 11:6, and Seder Olam ch. 5). All this reluctance was because he was unwilling to assume any dignity that would make him superior to his brother Aaron who was older than he and was also a prophet, as it is said (I Samuel 2:27) that the man of God spoke to Eli, the high-priest, in God's name, "Surely I revealed myself unto the house of thy father when they were in Egypt" — thy father means Aaron. Similary in : (Ezekiel 20:5, 7) "And I made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt … and I said unto them, "cast ye away every man the detestable things of his eyes", and that prophecy was spoken to Aaron (Exodus Rabbah 3:16; and cf. בריתא דל"ב מדות).
כבד פה SLOW OF SPEECH (lit. heavy of mouth) — I speak heavily (with difficulty); old French balbus. (English = stammerer).

Verse 11

מי שם פה וגו׳ WHO HATH MADE MAN’S MOUTH etc.? — Who taught you to speak when you were arraigned in judgment before Pharaoh on account of the Egyptian whom you slew?
או מי ישום אלם OR WHO MAKETH THE DUMB — Who made Pharaoh dumb so that he could not insist upon the carrying out of his command to kill you? Who made his ministers deaf so that they could not hear when he gave orders concerning you? And the executioners whose task it was to slay — who made them blind so that they could not see when you fled from the platform (raised place of execution) and escaped? (Midrash Tanchuma, Shemot 10)
הלא אנכי ה' DID NOT I whose name is THE LORD do all this?

Verse 12

Verse 13

ביד תשלח signifies by the hand of him whom Thou art accustomed to send; viz., Aaron (Exodus Rabbah 3:16). Another explanation is: by the hand of some other person whom Thou wilt be pleased to send — for in the end “I” shall not bring them into the land of Palestine nor shall “I” become their deliverer in the future — and You have many messengers! (Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 40)

Verse 14

ויחר אף AND [THE LORD’S] WRATH GLOWED — Rabbi Joshua the son of Korcha said: wherever the term “and God’s wrath glowed” occurs in the Scriptures it leaves a definite impression (mention of punishment of some kind follows), but here no such result is mentioned, for we do not find that any punishment came upon Moses in consequence of that anger of God. Rabbi José said to him: As a matter of fact here, too, some definite result is mentioned, viz., הלא אהרן אחיך הלוי “Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother?” — which implies, that he was destined to be a Levite (an attendant on the priests) and not a priest, — and I intended that the priesthood should proceed from you. Now, however, this shall not be so, but he will be the Priest and you the Levite, as it is said, (I Chronicles 23:14) “But as for Moses the man of God his sons are named among the tribe of Levi” (Zevachim 102a).
הנה הוא יצא לקראתך HE WILL BE GOING FORTH TOWARDS THEE, when you will be going to Egypt.
וראך ושמח בלבו AND WHEN HE SEETH THEE, HE WILL BE GLAD IN HIS HEART — not as you believe, that he will be angry with you because you have attained a high position. In consequence of this, Aaron was privileged to wear the ornament of the breastplate which was placed over his heart (cf. Exodus 28:29) (Shabbat 139a; Exodus Rabbah 3:17).

Verse 15

Verse 16

ודבר הוא לך means HE WILL SPEAK to the people ON THY ACCOUNT (לְךָ). This passage is proof, regarding every usage of לך and לי and לו and לכם and להם that follow after the verb דבר, that they all have the meaning of על “on account of”.
יהיה לך לפה HE SHALL BE TO THEE INSTEAD OF A MOUTH — he will be to thee as a spokesman because thou art slow of speech (Exodus Rabbah 3:17).

לאלהים means a superior and chief (cf. Onkelos).

Verse 17

Verse 18

וישב אל יתר חתנו AND HE RETURNED TO JETHRO HIS FATHER-IN-LAW, to obtain his permission to go to Egypt, for he had sworn to him that he would not leave Midian except by his permission (Nedarim 65a). He is here called יתר and he had seven names: Reuel, Jether, Jethro, Keni, Hobab, Cheber and Putiel (cf. Mekhilta)

Verse 19

FOR ALL THE MEN ARE DEAD — Who were these men? Dathan and Abiram: Really they were still alive, but they had come down in the world, having lost their property, and a poverty-stricken man may well be regarded as dead (Nedarim 64b).

Verse 20

על החמור UPON "THE" ASS — the ass designated for this purpose: this was the ass which Abraham had saddled for the purpose of travelling to bind Isaac on Mount Moriah, and this, too, is the ass upon which King Messiah will once show himself in public, as it is said, (Zechariah 9:9) "[Behold, thy king cometh unto thee, …] lowly and riding upon an ass" (Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 31).
וישב ארצה מצרים ויקח משה את מטה AND HE RETURNED TO THE LAND OF EGYPT: AND MOSES TOOK THE STAFF [OF GOD] — "Earlier and later" are not strictly observed in the Scriptures (i. e. incidents are not necessarily related in the exact order in which they occur. Here it should state: He took the staff etc. and returned to Egypt; cf. v. 17).

Verse 21

בלכתך לשוב מצרימה וגו׳ WHEN THOU GOEST TO RETURN TO EGYPT, [SEE THAT THOU DO etc.] — Understand that you should go thither with this purpose in mind: that you should be vigorous in carrying out my mission — to do all my wonders before Pharaoh and that you should not be afraid of him.
אשר שמתי בידך [THE WONDERS] WHICH I HAVE PUT IN THY HAND — Not in reference to the three signs mentioned above was God speaking, for he had not commanded him to do these before Pharaoh, but before Israel in order that they might believe in him, nor do we find that he did them before him. But God meant: those wonders which I shall in future place in thy hand in Egypt — such as (Exodus 7:9) "When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, [saying, show a wonder (מופת) for yourselves]". Do not be puzzled because it is written אשר שמתי (a past tense), for the following is what it means: when you will be speaking with him I shall already have put them into thy hand.

Verse 22

ואמרת אל פרעה AND THOU SHALT SAY UNTO PHARAOH — When you perceive that his heart is stubborn and that he refuses to let them go speak to him thus:
בני בכרי [ISRAEL IS] MY SON, MY FIRSTBORN — The term בכור "firstborn" denotes high dignity as, (Psalms 89:28) "I also will appoint him a בכור" (which is explained by the following words, "the highest of the kings of

the earth"). This is the literal meaning; a Midrashic comment is: Here (in these words) the Holy One, blessed be He, set His seal to the sale of the birthright which Jacob had purchased from Esau (Genesis Rabbah 63:14).

Verse 23

ואמר אליך AND I HAVE SAID UNTO THEE, as a messenger of the Omnipresent God, שלח את בני LET MY SON GO,
הנה אנכי הרג וגו׳ BEHOLD I WILL SLAY etc. — This, it is true, was the last of the plagues, but it was by mention of it that God gave him the first warning regarding the plagues that would come upon him, because this was the severest of them all. This is what Scripture means by, (Job 36:22) "Behold God is mighty in His power", therefore "Who is a teacher like unto Him?" — This signifies: A human being who intends to avenge himself upon his fellow keeps his plans secret in order that he may not seek means of escape. But the Holy One, blessed be He, is so mighty in His power that there is no possibility of escape from His hand except by returning to Him in penitence. Just on this account He teaches him (informs him what punishment will befall him) and so warns him to return to Him (Exodus Rabbah 9:9).

Verse 24

ויהי AND HE WAS — Moses was — DURING THE JOURNEY IN THE LODGING PLACE.
ויבקש המיתו AND HE SOUGHT TO PUT HIM TO DEATH — the angel sought etc., because he had not circumcised his son Eliezer; and because he had showed himself remiss in this, he brought upon himself the punishment of death. It has been taught in a Boraitha (Nedarim 31b): Rabbi José said: God forbid that this was so; Moses had not been remiss in this duty; but he thought, "If I circumcise him and immediately proceed on the journey, the child's life will be in danger for three days. If, on the other hand, I circumcise him and wait three days — the Holy One, blessed be He, has commanded me, "Go return to Egypt!" Consequently, he obeyed His command, intending to circumcise the child as soon as the opportunity presented itself. There was therefore no remissness on his part; why, then, was he threatened with punishment? Because he busied himself with the affairs of the lodging place first, (i. e. because when he arrived at the inn he troubled himself first about eating and drinking. He should first have circumcised his son. Being now so much nearer Egypt, the danger that follows upon the circumcision was not so great, since the interval of time between the operation and his arrival in Egypt was now shorter than if he had circumcised him before he set out on the journey). See this in Treatise Nedarim. — The angel became a kind of serpent and swallowed him (Moses) from his head to his thigh, spued him forth, and then again swallowed him from his legs to that place (the membrum). Zipporah thus understood that this had happened on account of the delay in the circumcision of her son (Nedarim 32a; cf. Exodus Rabbah 5:8).

Verse 25

ותגע לרגליו AND CAST IT AT HIS FEET — i. e. she cast it before Moses' feet (Talmud Yerushalmi Nedarim 3:9).
ותאמר AND SHE SAID, referring to her son:
כי חתן דמים אתה לי which means, thou hast brought it about that my bridegroom (Moses) was on the point of being killed because of thee: thou hast been to me my husband's murderer.

Verse 26

וירף SO HE LOOSENED HIS HOLD — the angel loosened his hold ממנו FROM HIM; (cf. Exodus Rabbah 5:8). אז THEN she understood that he had come to kill him because of the delay in the circumcision,
אמרה חתן דמים למלות SHE SAID "BRIDEGROOM OF BLOOD BECAUSE OF THE CIRCUMCISION" — my bridegroom was on the point of being killed on account of the circumcision.
למלות means on account of (ל) the circumcision (מולות). The word מולות it a noun, and the ל prefixed it used in the tense of על, "on account of", just as in (Exodus 14:3) "And Pharaoh will say regarding the children (לבני) of Israel". Onkelos, however, translated the word דמים as having reference to the blood of the circumcision (whilst, according to Rashi, it refers to the blood of Moses which was about to be shed).

Chapter 5

Verse 1

ואחר באו משה ואהרן AND AFTERWARDS MOSES AND AARON CAME — But the elders slipped away one by one from behind Moses and Aaron until every-one of them had slipped away before they arrived at the palace, because they were afraid to go there. At Sinai they were punished for this, for it is stated (Exodus 24:2) "And Moses alone shall draw near unto the Lord, but they, (the elders; cf. Exodus 24:1) shall not draw near" — He bid them stay behind. (Exodus Rabbah 5:14)

Verse 2

Verse 3

פן יפגענו LEST HE LIGHT ON US — They should have said, "Lest He light on thee (Pharaoh) [with pestilence] etc." — but they showed respect to royalty (the king) by thus expressing themselves. This term פגיעה "lighting on", "meeting" denotes meeting with death (Exodus Rabbah 5:15).

Verse 4

תפריעו את העם ממעשיו means ye detach and take them away from their work, because they listen to you and believe that they may refrain from the work. Similar are: (Proverbs 4:15) "פרעהו pass not by it", i. e. keep it far from thee, pass not by it; (Proverbs 1:25) "and ye withdraw (ותפרעו) all my counsel"; (Exodus 32:25) "for it is פרע" i. e. it had removed itself from the proper path and had made itself a thing to be abhorred (but cf. Rashi on this verse where he explains the word by מגולה — נתגלה שמצו וקלונו).
לכו לסבלתיכם. GO YE UNTO YOUR BURDENS — Go to your work which you have to do at home; but it cannot signify "go to your labours as slaves", for he was speaking to Moses and Aaron who were of the tribe of Levi, and the work of Egyptian slavery had not been imposed on the tribe of Levi. You may know that this was so, because Moses and Aaron went and came just as they pleased (Exodus Rabbah 5:16).

Verse 5

הן רבים עתה עם הארץ BEHOLD THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND NOW ARE MANY upon whom lies the duty of working, and you make them rest from their burdens — this is a great loss to us, since so many will refrain from work.

Verse 6

הנגשים THE TASKMASTERS — These were Egyptians, and the שוטרים, bailiffs, were Israelites (cf. vv. 14, 15, 19) (Exodus Rabbah 5:18). A taskmaster (נוגש), was given charge over many bailiffs, and a שוטר was one who was appointed to have control over the workmen.

Verse 7

תבן STRAW — In old French estouble; English stubble. They used to knead this into the clay.
לבנים BRICKS — old French tuiles: English tiles, which they make from clay and dry in the sun; sometimes they are burnt in a kiln.
כתמול שלשם means as you have been doing UP TILL NOW (not "yesterday and the day before" as is the literal meaning, but merely "formerly").
וקששו means AND LET THEM GATHER.

Verse 8

ואת מתכנת הלבנים means the total number of bricks which each made per day when straw was being supplied to them — that total you shall impose upon them now also, in order that the service may be hard upon them.
כי נרפים signifies because they have loosened themselves from the work; therefore (this word in Rashi corresponds to על כן in the Hebrew text) their mind turns to idleness and they cry out, saying, נלכה וגו׳ LET US GO [AND SACRIFICE etc.].
מתכנת — This word, and ותכן (v. 18), and the words of the same root in (I Samuel 2:3) "And by Him actions are counted (נתכנו)" and in (2 Kings 12:12) "the money that was counted (המתכן)", all have the meaning of counting.
נרפים — The work is loose (רפויה) in their hand and neglected by them so that they are loosened (הם נרפים) from it. In old French retrait.

Verse 9

ואל ישעו בדברי שקר AND LET THEM NOT REGARD VAIN WORDS — let them not think and speak always about "words of wind" saying, "Let us go and sacrifice". Of similar meaning is, (Psalm 119:117) "And I will speak of (ואשעה ב־) thy statutes continually". The phrase (Deuteronomy 28:37) למשל ולשנינה "[thou shalt become] a proverb and a byword" we translate in the Targum by "a topic of conversation (שועי)", and the word ויספר (Genesis 24:66) "and he related" by ואשתעי "and he spoke about". One cannot possibly say that the word ישעו has the same meaning as the verbs in (Genesis 4:4) "And the Lord turned (וישע) to Abel" and in (Genesis 4:4) "but to Cain and his offering he did not turn (שעה)", and that we must translate אל ישעו by "Let them not turn", for if this were so Scripture should have written אל דברי שקר or לדברי שקר (instead of בדברי) for so is the construction in all such cases. Examples are: (Isaiah 17:7) "A man shall turn to (ישעה אל) his Maker"; (Isaiah 17:8) "and he shall not turn to (ישעה על) the altars"; (Isaiah 31:1) "they turn not unto (שעו על) the Holy One of Israel". I do not find the construction of a ב following these verbs in the sense of "turning to", but after an expression of דבר "speaking" — as when one intently directs his conversation upon a matter — the construction with כ is quite an appropriate one. For instance: (Ezekiel 33:30) "those who intently direct their conversation (הנדברים) upon thee (בך)"; (Numbers 12:1) "And Miriam and Aaron directed their speech (ותדבר) upon Moses (במשה)"; (Zechariah 4:1) "And the angel who directed his conversaion (הדובר) upon me (בי)"; (Deuteronomy 11:9) "To turn your conversation (לדבר) intently upon them

(בם)”; (Psalm 119:46) “And I will direct my speech (אדברה) upon thy testimonies (בעדותיך)”. So, too, here: ואל ישעו בדברי שקר means “let them not always be conversing about vain and idle matters”.

Verse 10

Verse 11

אתם לכו קחו לכם תבן GO, YE, TAKE TO YOURSELVES STRAW — and you will have to go pretty quickly,
כי אין נגרע מעבודתכם דבר FOR THERE SHALL NOT BE DIMINISHED OF YOUR WORK A SINGLE THING from the whole total of bricks which you used to make daily when straw was supplied to you, ready to use, from the king’s store.

Verse 12

לקשש קש לתבן means TO MAKE A GATHERING, to make a collection FOR the purpose of STRAW for the clay.
קש denotes collecting. Because stubble is something that is strewn about and must be gathered (קושש) it is called קש in other passages.

Verse 13

אצים means PRESSING.
דבר יום ביומו means the full quantity due each day complete it on that day, as ye used to do when straw was ready at hand.

Verse 14

ויכו שטרי בני ישראל AND THE BAILIFFS OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL … WERE SMITTEN — These bailiffs were Israelites and they spared their fellow-Israelites, not urging them on to their work. When they handed over the bricks to the taskmasters who were Egyptians and something was deficient in the total they used to beat them because they had not urged on the Israelitish workmen. On this account these bailiffs were privileged to become members of the Sanhedrin later on, and there was taken some of the prophetical spirit that was upon Moses and it was placed upon them, as it is said, (Numbers 11:16) “Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel [whom thou knowest]” — of those about whom thou knowest the kindly acts which they did in Egypt, “for they are the real elders of the people having been their bailiffs” (Exodus Rabbah 5:20).
ויכו שטרי בני ישראל אשר שמו נגשי פרעה THEN WERE SMITTEN THE BAILIFFS OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WHOM PHARAOH’S TASKMASTERS HAD PUT as bailiffs עליהם OVER THEM (i. e. over the Israelites) לאמר מדוע וגו׳ SAYING, WHEREFORE etc. — Why were they beaten? because they (the taskmasters) said to them (the bailiffs) WHEREFORE DID YE NOT FINISH (גם תמול גם היום) BOTH YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY THE TASK SET FOR YOU (חקכם) IN MAKING BRICKS as ye did yesterday-in-the-third-degree (כתמול שלשם) — which means the day before yesterday — which was the time when straw was given to them.
Heb. וַיֻּכּוּ They were the object of an action. [The word is in the “hoph’al” conjugation, the recipient of the “hiph’il.”] They were beaten by others; the taskmasters beat them.

Verse 15

Verse 16

ולבנים אמרים לנו AND BRICKS THEY — the taskmasters — SAY TO US עשו MAKE, just as the former number.
וְחַטָּאת עַמֶּךָ BUT THE FAULT IS IN THINE OWN PEOPLE — If the word וחטאת had the vowel Patach under the ט I would say that it is a noun in the construct state, so that the meaning would be, "and this thing is the sin of thy people" But now, since the vowel is Kametz, it is a noun in the absolute case, and its meaning is as follows: "And this thing brings sin upon thy people", as though it were written וחטאת לעמך. Sirnilarly we find ל omitted in, (Ruth 1:19) "When they were come בית לחם" which is the same as לבית לחם, to Bethlehem, and there are many similar examples.

Verse 17

Verse 18

ותכן לבנים means THE NUMBER OF THE BRICKS; similar is (2 Kings 12:12) "the money המתכן", i. e. the money which was counted, just as it states in that passage (v. 11), "and they put it up in bags and counted the money".

Verse 19

ויראו שטרי בני ישראל The meaning is: AND THE BAILIFFS OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL DID SEE [THEM] i. e. their fellow-lsraelites who were ruled by them,
ברע — they saw them in the misfortune and trouble that befell them, because they had to make the labour hard upon them. לאמר לא תגרעו וגו׳ BY SAYING, YE SHALL NOT DIMINISH etc.

Verse 20

ויפגעו AND THEY MET — men of Israel met — את משה ואהרן וגו׳ MOSES AND AARON etc.; Our Rabbis explained that wherever it speaks of people "quarelling" (2:13; cf. Rashi on that verse) or "standing" these were Dathan and Abiram about whom it is stated (Numbers 16:27) "[And Dathan and Abiram] came out standing" (Nedarim 64b).

Verse 21

Verse 22

למה הרעתה לעם הזה WHEREFORE HAST THOU DONE SO EVIL TO THIS PEOPLE? — And if You ask, "What concern is that of yours?" I answer "I have to complain that You have sent me at all" (Exodus Rabbah 5:22).

Verse 23

הרע This is an expression denoting "he has caused something to happen" — he (Pharaoh) has brought even more evil upon them. It must be translated in the Targum by אבאיש "he has treated badly".

Chapter 6

Verse 1

עתה תראה וגו׳ NOW THOU SHALT SEE etc. — You have criticised My methods of guiding the world. You are not like Abraham to whom I said. (Genesis 21:12) "for through Isaac shall seed be raised unto thee" and to whom I afterwards said, (Gen 22:2) "bring him up as a burnt offering", and yet he did not criticise My ways, therefore, עתה תראה NOW THOU SHALT SEE — what will now be done to Pharaoh thou shalt see, but thou shalt not see what will be done to the kings of the seven nations of Canaan when I shall bring them (the Israelites) into the Holy Land (cf. Sanhedrin 111a).
כי ביד חזקה ישלחם this means: for on account of My strong hand (i. e. the strong hand which I will use against him, the ב in ביד denoting "on account of") — which will prove strong against him he will send them away.
וביד חזקה יגרשם מארצו AND WITH A STRONG HAND SHALL HE DRIVE THEM OUT OF HIS LAND — against the will of the Israelites themselves will he drive them out of his land: they will not have sufficient time to prepare provisions for themselves for the journey. So, indeed, does Scripture state: (Exodus 12:33) "And Egypt was urgent (תחזק. lit., was strong) upon the people etc.".

Verse 2

וידבר אלהים אל משה AND GOD SPOKE UNTO MOSES — He took him to task because he had spoken so censoriously when he said, (Exodus 5:22) "Wherefore hast thou done so evil to this people".
ויאמר אליו אני ה׳ AND HE SAID UNTO HIM, I AM THE LORD, Who am faithful to recompense with a full reward those who walk before Me. Nor have I sent you with no purpose in view (cf. 5:22), but to fulfil the promise which I made to the early patriarchs. In this sense we find that the phrase is to be explained in many passages: אני ה׳ signifies, I am the Lord, Who am faithful to exact punishment — when it is spoken in reference to a matter that demands punishment, as, for instance, (Leviticus 19:12) "And thou profanest the name of thy God; I am the Lord"; and when it is spoken in reference to observing the Divine commands — as in, (Leviticus 22:31) "Ye shall keep my commandments and do them; I am the Lord" — it signifies, "I am the Lord Who am faithful to give reward."

Verse 3

וארא AND I APPEARED — to the patriarchs.
באל שדי BY THE NAME OF GOD ALMIGHTY — I made certain promises to them and in the case of all of these I said unto them, "I am God Almighty".
ושמי ה׳ לא נודעתי להם BUT BY MY NAME THE LORD WAS I NOT KNOWN TO THEM — It is not written here לא הודעתי [My name the Lord] I did not make known to them, but לא נודעתי [by My name, the Lord], was I not known [unto them] — i. e. I was not recognised by them in My attribute of "keeping faith", by reason of which My name is called ה׳, which denotes that I am certain to substantiate My promise, for, indeed, I made promises to them but did not fulfill them [during their lifetime].

Verse 4

וגם הקמתי את בריתי וגו׳ Then, ALSO, when I appeared unto them by the name of God Almighty I ESTABLISHED and set up MY COVENANT between Myself and them
לתת להם את ארץ כנען TO GIVE THEM THE LAND OF CANAAN — Of Abraham it is stated in the chapter that contains the commandment of the Circumcision, (Genesis 17:1, and 17:8) "[The Lord appeared to Abraham and said unto

him], I am God Almighty etc., and I will give to thee and to thy seed after thee the land of thy sojourning". Of Isaac it is stated, (Genesis 26:3) "[The Lord appeared unto him and said], For unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries, and I will establish the oath which I sware unto Abraham, thy father", and that oath here referred to which I sware to Abraham I uttered by the name of God Almighty. Of Jacob it is stated, (Genesis 35:9, 11, 12) "[And God appeared unto Jacob … and God said unto him], I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply, … the land which I gave [Abraham and Isaac to thee I will give it] etc." So you see that I made certain vows to them and I have not yet fulfilled them.

Verse 5

וגם אני — Since I established and set up My covenant it is incumbent upon Me to fulfil it; therefore, שמעתי את נאקת בני ישראל I HAVE HEARD THE GROANING OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL who groan (complain) אשר מצרים מעבדים אתם THAT THE EGYPTIANS ARE ENSLAVING THEM, ואזכר AND I REMEMBER that covenant which I have already made with them; because at the covenant "between the pieces" I said to him, (Genesis 15:14) "And also against that nation whom they shall serve will I pronounce judgment."

Verse 6

לכן THEREFORE, i. e. in accordance with the tenor of that oath (cf. Exodus Rabbah 6)
אמר לבני ישראל אני ה׳ SAY UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, I AM THE LORD Who am faithful in My promise,
והוצאתי אתכם AND I WILL BRING YOU OUT, — for so did I promise them: (Genesis 15:14) "and afterwards shall they go out with great substance". סבלת מצרים means the encumbrance of the burdens of Egypt.

Verse 7

Verse 8

נשאתי את ידי I HAVE LIFTED UP MY HAND — I have lifted it up to swear by My Throne.

Verse 9

ולא שמעו אל משה BUT THEY HEARKENED NOT TO MOSES — they did not accept his words of comfort.
מקצר רוח THROUGH ANGUISH (lit. shortness) OF SPIRIT — If one is in anguish his breath comes in short gasps and he cannot draw long breaths. In a somewhat similar manner to this I heard this section expounded by Rabbi Baruch the son of Rabbi Eliezer, and he cited the following verse to me in proof of his explanation: (Jeremiah 16:21) "This once will I cause them to know My hand and My might, and they shall know that My Name is the Lord". Rabbi Baruch said: we may learn from this text that when the Holy One, blessed be He, fulfils His words, even when it is a matter of punishment, He makes it known that His Name is the Lord; and, of course, this is all the more so, when He fulfils His words in a matter of bestowing reward. — Our Rabbis explained it (this section) as having reference to what precedes it — that Moses said (5:22): "Wherefore hast thou done so evil [to this people]". Whereupon God said to him, "Alas, for those that are gone (i. e. the patriarchs) and are no more to be found! I really have reason to deplore the death of the patriarchs. Many a time did I reveal Myself to them by the name 'God Almighty', and not

once did they ask Me, What is Thy Name? (i. e. what is the name that describes Thy true essence); but thou hast at once said (Exodus 3:13) "[If they ask] 'what is His name', what shall I say unto them?!" (Exodus Rabbah 6:4; Sanhedrin 111a).
וגם הקמתי וגו׳ ALSO I SET UP [MY COVENANT WITH THEM TO GIVE THEM THE LAND OF CANAAN], and yet when Abraham wished to bury Sarah he could not obtain a grave until he purchased one at a high price. So, too, in the case of Isaac, people strove with him for possession of the wells which he had dug. Similarly, of Jacob it is stated, (Genesis 33:19) "He purchased a parcel of field," in which to pitch his tent. Yet none of them criticised My dealings with them, whilst you say "Wherefore hast Thou done so evil [to this people!]" — But this Midrashic exposition does not fit in with the text for several reasons. Firstly, because Scripture does not state "And they did not ask of Me regarding my Name, the Lord". And if you say in refutation of my objection that they did not mean that ושמי ה' לא נודעתי actually signifies that they did not ask what is My Name, but it means "He did not tell them that this was His Name and yet they did not ask Him what it was", then I reply that these words cannot mean that He did not tell them His name, for at the very first when He revealed Himself to Abraham at the Covenant "between the pieces'' it is said, (Genesis 15:7) "I am the Lord (אני ה׳) who brought thee out from Ur of the Chaldees". Further (secondly), how does the context run on to the statements which Scripture places after the above verses, viz., "And I have also heard etc." and "Wherefore say unto the children of Israel etc."? Therefore I say: let Scripture be explained in its literal sense so that each statement fits into its proper setting, but the Midrashic exposition may also be given, if you like, as it is said (Jeremiah 23:29) "Is not my word like as fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer which, by the force of its own blow, the rock at which it strikes shatters in pieces".

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

ואיך ישמעני פרעה HOW THAN SHALL PHARAOH HEAR ME? — This is one of the ten inferences from minor to major which are found in the Bible (Genesis Rabbah 92:7).
ערל שפתים OF UNCIRCUMCISED LIPS — It really means obstructed as regards the lips. So, too, in respect to all forms derived from ערל I say that they signify obstructed. E. g. (Jeremiah 6:10) "their ear is עֲרֵלָה — stopped up so that it will not hear; (Jeremiah 9:25) "עַרְלֵי in heart" — their hearts are closed so that they will not understand; (Habakkuk 2:16) "Drink thou, also וְהֵעָרֵל" — and become thou closed up (in thy senses) through intoxication caused by the cup of curse mentioned in that passage; the foreskin (ערלה) of the flesh is so called because the membrum is closed up and covered by it; (Leviticus 19:23) וערלתם ערלתו signifies, make for it (the tree) a closure (אוטם) and cover by means of an inhibition that will prove a barrier against eating it; (Leviticus 19:23 "Three years shall it be to you as ערלים" — it shall be closed up and covered and barred so that it many not be eaten.

Verse 13

וידבר ה' אל משה ואהרן AND THE LORD SPAKE UNTO MOSES AND UNTO AARON — because Moses had said, "I am of uncircumcised lips". The Holy One, blessed be He, associated Aaron with him to be his mouth-piece and spokesman.
ויצום אל בני ישראל signifies that HE GAVE THEM A CHARGE regarding them; viz., to deal with them in a gentle manner and to be patient with them (Exodus Rabbah 7:3)
ואל פרעה מלך מצרים signifies that He charged them with regard to PHARAOH, KING OF EGYPT, viz., that they should show respect to him in all that they spoke. This is a Midrashic explanation (Exodus Rabbah 7:3; Midrash Tanchuma, Vaera 2); but the real meaning is: He gave them a command with regard to Israel and with regard to His mission on which he had sent them to Pharaoh. And what the purport of this command was is explained in the second section from here (vv. 29—31) after the order of genealogy set forth in the next passage. It properly should follow here, but because Scripture has mentioned Moses and Aaron here, it interrupts the narrative by interpolating the section beginning (v. 14), "These are the heads of their fathers' houses", in order to inform us how Moses and Aaron were born (who were their parents) and with whom they are connected by descent.

Verse 14

אלה ראשי בית אבתם THESE ARE THE HEADS OF THEIR FATHERS' HOUSES — Since it (Scripture) finds itself compelled to give the genealogy of the tribe of Levi as far as Moses and Aaron because of Moses and Aaron, it begins to give the genealogy of the tribes in the order of their birth commencing from Reuben. And in Pesikta Rabbati 7 (on Numbers 7:12) I have seen the statement, that because their father Jacob reproached these three tribes in the hour of his death Scripture again enumerates here their genealogy alone of all the tribes to indicate that they nevertheless were men of worth.

Verse 15

Verse 16

ושני חיי לוי וגו׳ AND THE YEARS OF THE LIFE OF LEVI WERE etc. — Why is the number of the years of Levi mentioned? In order to tell us how long the period of slavery lasted — because so long as even one of the sons of Jacob (lit. the tribes) remained alive there was no slavery imposed upon the Israelites, as it is said, (Exodus 1:6) "And Joseph died and all his brethren", and afterwards it is stated (Exodus 1:8), "Now there arose a king" (who enslaved them); and Levi lived the longest of all of them (Seder Olam 3).

Verse 17

Verse 18

ושני חיי קהת … ושני חיי עמרם וגו׳ AND THE YEARS OF THE LIFE OF KOHATH WERE etc. … AND THE YEARS OF THE LIFE OF AMRAM WERE etc. — From these numbers we may gather regarding the period of residence of the children of Israel, — viz., four hundred years, of which Scripture speaks, that these four hundred years were not passed in Egypt alone, but that they date from the day of Isaac's birth. You know that Kohath was one of those

who went down to Egypt; now reckon all his years (133) although really we should not take into account the years he lived before he went down to Egypt, and the years of Amram, his son (137), and the eighty years of Moses, the latter's son, which he had attained when the Israelites left Egypt, and you will not find them totaling to four hundred, and in this calculation many years of the sons' ages are included in those of their fathers (i. e. in such a calculation one must deduct in each instance the father's age when his son was born since this number is included in the total age of each of these persons) (cf. Rashi on Exodus 12:40)

Verse 19

Verse 20

יוכבד דדתו JOCHEBED HIS AUNT — The Targum has: his father's sister; she was daughter of Levi (cf. Exodus 2:1) and sister of Kohath.

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

אחות נחשון THE SISTER OF NAASHON — Hence they (the Rabbis) learned (i.e. from the fact that Scripture states who her brother was when it mentions her marriage to Aaron) that he who is about to take a wife should strictly investigate who her brothers are (Bava Batra 110a).

Verse 24

Verse 25

מבנות פוטיאל ONE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF PUTIEL — of the family of Jethro (cf. Rashi on Exodus 4:18) who used to fatten (פטם) calves for idolatrous sacrifice, and of the family of Joseph who overcame (פטפט, who talked or argued with) his passion (Sotah 43a; Bava Batra 109b).

Verse 26

הוא אהרן ומשה THESE ARE THAT AARON AND MOSES who are mentioned above where it states (v. 20) that Jochebed bore them to Amram. הוא אהרן ומשה There are some passages where Scripture mentions Aaron before Moses (as here) and other passages where it mentions Moses before Aaron; this is done in order to indicate that they were equal in all respects (more lit., that they weighed alike) (Mekhilta).
על צבאתם — This is the same as בצבאותם with their hosts — all their hosts according to their tribes. Sometimes the word על is merely used in place of a single letter (ב as a prefix); e. g., (Genesis 27:40) "על חרבך shalt thou live" which is the same as בחרבך, by thy sword; (Ezekiel 33:26) "Ye stand על חרבכם" which is the same as בחרבכם, by your sword.

Verse 27

הם המדברים וגו׳ THESE ARE THEY WHO SPAKE TO PHARAOH — It was they who received the command to speak to Pharaoh (cf. v. 26), and it was they who carried it out by actually speaking to him (cf. e.g. Exodus 7:7). הוא משה ואהרן THESE ARE MOSES AND AARON — they remained always the same in carrying out their mission and in their integrity from beginning to end (cf. Megillah 11a).

Verse 28

And it came to pass on the day that the Lord spoke unto Moses in the land of Egypt: [This is connected with the following verse]

Verse 29

וידבר ה׳ AND THE LORD SPAKE — This is the self-same command which was mentioned before, viz., (v. 11) "Go in, speak unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt", but because it (Scripture) broke off the narrative in order to record their genealogy it now reverts to it and begins it anew. אני ה׳ I AM THE LORD — I am powerful enough to send you and to carry out the matter on which I have sent you.

Verse 30

ויאמר משה לפני ה׳ AND MOSES SAID BEFORE THE LORD — This is the statement which he made above, (v. 12), "Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me". Scripture repeats it here, because it broke off the narrative for the reason already given. So is the method of the historian — just as a person who says, "let us return to the previous subject".

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

Verse 34

Verse 35

Verse 36

Verse 37

Verse 38

Verse 39

Verse 40

Verse 41

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Verse 131

Verse 132

Verse 133

Verse 134

Verse 135

Verse 136

Verse 137

Chapter 7

Verse 1

נתתיך אלהים לפרעה This signifies I have made thee a judge and castigator — to castigate him with plagues and pains.
יהיה נביאך [AARON] SHALL BE THY PROPHET — This must be understood as the Targum takes it: thy interpreter. Similarly, wherever this term of נבואה is mentioned it refers to a man who publicly proclaims and utters to the people words of reproof. It is of the same derivation as, (Isaiah 57:19) "utterance (נ׳ב) of the lips"; (Proverbs 10:31) "it utters (ינוב) wisdom"; (I Samuel 10:13) "he made an end of proclaiming (התנבות)", which is in the book of Samuel. In old French we call him predicar; English preacher.

Verse 2

אתה תדבר THOU SHALT SPEAK once, every separate message just as you have heard it from My mouth, and your brother Aaron shall express it in eloquent language and explain it in Pharaoh's hearing.

Verse 3

ואני אקשה AND I WILL ALLOW [PHARAOH'S HEART] TO HARDEN — Since he has wickedly resisted Me, and it is manifest to Me that the heathen nations find no spiritual satisfaction in setting their whole heart to return to Me penitently, it is better that his heart should be hardened in order that My signs may be multiplied against him so that ye may recognise My divine power. Such, indeed, is the method of the Holy One, blessed be He: He brings punishment upon the nations so that Israel may hear of it and fear Him, as it is said, (Zephaniah 3:6, 3:7) "I have cut off nations, their corners are desolate etc. … I said: Surely thou wilt fear Me, thou wilt receive correction" (cf. Yevamot 63a). Nevertheless, in the case of the first five plagues it is not stated, "The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart" but "Pharaoh's heart was hardened" (Midrash Tanchuma, Vaera 3).

Verse 4

את ידי this must be translated literally, "hand", (not "power") I will lay My hand upon Egypt to smite them.

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

מופת A WONDER — a sign to prove that there is power in Him who is sending you.

Verse 10

לתנין means A SERPENT.

Verse 11

בלהטיהם The Targum renders this by בלחשיהון: with their secret spells. There is no other example of this word in the Bible. One may compare it to the first word in (Genesis 3:24) "the להט of the sword that turned round" — it appeared to turn round through some magic spell.

Verse 12

ויבלע מטה אהרן BUT AARON'S STAFF SWALLOWED (It states that the staff swallowed) — after it had again become a staff it swallowed all of them (Shabbat 97 a; Exodus Rabbah 9:7).

Verse 13

Verse 14

כבד — This word should be translated in the Targum by יקיר (his heart is hard — an adjective) and not by אתיקר (his heart has become Hard — a verb, as is given in some editions of Onkelos) because it is an adjective, just as (Exodus 18:18) "the thing is too heavy (כָּבֵד) for thee".

Verse 15

הנה יצא המימה LO, HE GOETH OUT UNTO THE WATER to ease himself. For he claimed to be a god and asserted that because of his divine power he did not need to ease himself; and therefore he used to rise early and go to the Nile and there eased himself in secret (Midrash Tanchuma, Vaera 14; Exodus Rabbah 9:8).

Verse 16

עד כה means UNTIL NOW. A Midrashic explanation (taking this sentence to mean, "thou wilt not hearken until (עד) thou hearest the word "כה") is: until thou hearest from me the announcement of the slaughter of the first-born, which I will begin with the words, (Exodus 11:4) "Thus (כה) saith the Lord, About midnight etc."

Verse 17

ונהפכו לדם AND THEY SHALL BE TURNED INTO BLOOD — Because rain does not fall in Egypt but the Nile rises and irrigates the land and the Egyptians on this account worshipped the Nile, therefore God first smote their deity and afterwards smote them (Exodus Rabbah 9:9).

Verse 18

ונלאו מצרים THE EGYPTIANS SHALL WEARY THEMSELVES in seeking a cure for the waters of the river that they may become fitted for drinking.

Verse 19

אמר אל אהרן SAY UNTO AARON — Because the river had protected Moses when he was cast into it, therefore it was not smitten by him neither at the plague of blood nor at that of frogs, but it was smitten by Aaron (Exodus Rabbah 9:10).
נהרתם THEIR STREAMS — These are the flowing rivers, just like our rivers in France.
יאריהם — These are canals which convey water being made by human agency and extending from the river bank into the fields. The waters of the Nile increase in volume and rise by way of these canals and so irrigate the fields.
אגמיהם — A collection of waters that neither spring up from beneath the ground nor flow along, but which remain in one spot. In old French they call it étang.
בכל ארץ מצרים [THERE WILL BE BLOOD] THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT— also in their bathing establishments and in the baths in their houses.
ובעצים ובאבנים — the water which happened to be BOTH IN vessels of WOOD AND in vessels of STONE.

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

בלטיהם SECRET ARTS — magic formulas which they utter secretly and in a whisper. Our Rabbis stated that בלטיהם refers to the work of demons, בלהטיהם to witchcraft (Sanhedrin 67b; Exodus Rabbah 9:11).
ויחזק לב פרעה AND PHARAOH'S HEART WAS HARDENED so that he said: You are doing this by witchcraft: "You are bringing straw to Afarayim"— a city that is full of straw; thus you bring sorcery to Egypt, a land that is full of sorcery (Menachot 85a; Exodus Rabbah 9:6-7).

Verse 23

גם לזאת [NEITHER DID HE SET HIS HEART] TO THIS ALSO — to the wonder of the staff which was changed into a serpent and also not to that of the blood.

Verse 24

Verse 25

וימלא AND THERE WAS COMPLETED (the verb is singular) שבעת ימים the number of SEVEN DAYS during which the river did not return to its original condition. For each plague functioned a quarter of a month and for three quarters He warned and cautioned them (Midrash Tanchuma, Vaera 13; Exodus Rabbah 9:12).

Verse 26

Verse 27

ואם מאן אתה — AND IF THOU BE A REFUSER. מאן — The word has the same meaning as ממאן, refusing, (the Piel participle) only the difference is that it is a description of a person having reference to the action he always does (i. e. it is an adjective and the full phrase would be איש מאן) similar to שָׁלֵו "a man at ease" (Job 16:12); שָׁקֵט "a man at ease" (Jeremiah 48:11); וְזָעֵף [סר] "a man displeased" (1 Kings 20:43), whilst מָמְאֵן merely describes the person as refusing at some particular moment.
נגף את כל גבולך I WILL PLAGUE ALL THY BOUNDARIES — נוגף means smiting. So, too, wherever a form from the root נגף occurs, it does not necessarily denote killing but it may mean merely smiting. Similarly, (Exodus 21:22) "and if they hurt (ונגפו) a woman with child", does not mean they kill (as the context shows); so, too, (Jeremiah 13:16) "and before your feet stumble (יתנגפו)" (i. e. hit against something); (Psalms 91:12) "lest thou dash (תגף) thy foot against a stone"; (Isaiah 8:14) "and for a stone of stumbling (נגף)".

Verse 28

ועלו AND THEY SHALL GO UP from the river

בבֵיתֶךָ — first into thine house and afterwards, בבֵית עֲבָדֶיךָ — into the house of thy servants; he took the first step in counselling evil against Israel, as it is stated (1:9) "He spake to his people, "[Behold, the children of Israel are more numerous and powerful than we]", and with him, therefore, did punishment begin (cf. Sotah 11a and Exodus Rabbah 10:3).

Verse 29

וּבְכָה וּבְעַמֶּךָ AND UPON (or in) THEE AND THY PEOPLE [SHALL THE FROGS COME] — they made their way right into their bodies and crowed (Exodus Rabbah 10:3).

Chapter 8

Verse 1

Verse 2

וַתַּעַל הַצְּפַרְדֵּעַ AND THE FROGS (lit. frog) CAME UP — Really there was only one frog, but when they struck at it, it was split into many swarms. This is a Midrashic explanation of the usage of the singular noun here (cf. Sanhedrin 67b; Exodus Rabbah 10:4). But as a literal explanation one must say that the swarm of the frogs is denoted by the singular form. Similar is, (v. 14) "and there was the כִּנִּם" — the swarm of insects, in old French pedulier; i. e. a swarm of lice. So, too, here, וַתַּעַל הַצְּפַרְדֵּעַ means: and there came up a grenouillière (old French) i. e. a swarm of frogs.

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

הִתְפָּאֵר עָלַי GLORY OVER ME — Similar is, (Isaiah 10:15) "Should the axe יִתְפָּאֵר against him that heweth therewith" i. e. should it boast, saying "I am greater than thou"; old French vanter. Therefore הִתְפָּאֵר means pride yourself on showing your cleverness and on asking of me a difficult matter asserting that I shall be unable to do it.
לְמָתַי אַעְתִּיר FOR WHAT PERIOD SHALL I ENTREAT FOR THEE — With reference to the entreaty which I shall make to-day regarding the destruction of the frogs, by what period do you wish that they should be destroyed, and you will see whether I can carry out my promise by the time which you will set me. If the text said מָתַי אַעְתִּיר (without ל), it would signify "when shall I pray?" but now that it is said לְמָתַי, it signifies I will pray to-day for you that the frogs should be destroyed by the time which you will set for me. Tell me, then, by what day you wish that they shall be destroyed. The words here, אַעְתִּיר and הֶעְתִּירוּ (v. 4) and הֶעְתַּרְתִּי (v. 25) are Hiphil forms, and it does not say אֶעְתַּר and עְתָרוּ and וְעָתַרְתִּי (Kal forms) because wherever the root עתר is used it denotes to pray much (more lit. Rashi's words signify "to multiply praying", "to make much praying"), and just as one says אַרְבֶּה and הַרְבּוּ and וְהִרְבֵּיתִי which all have the meaning of

"causing an action to happen" (in this case, causing a thing to be much — our Hiphil conjugation), so one says אַעְתִּיר and הַעְתִּירוּ and וְהַעְתַּרְתִּי "I increase", "increase ye" and "I will increase" i. e. I will increase words. The passage which serves as evidence of the meaning of all these words is (Ezekiel 35:13) "וְהַעְתַּרְתֶּם your words against Me" — which can only mean "Ye have multiplied" (being a transitive verb; cf. Rashi on Genesis 25:21).

Verse 6

ויאמר למחר AND HE SAID, FOR TO-MORROW — He said: Pray to-day that they may be destroyed by to-morrow.

Verse 7

Verse 8

ויצא.. ויצעק THEY WENT … AND CRIED [UNTO THE LORD) immediately that they should be destroyed by to-morrow.

Verse 9

Verse 10

חמרים חמרים means IN HEAPS, just as the Targum renders it, דגורין, which means גלין heaps (דגורא is the Targum of הגל in Genesis 31:46).

Verse 11

והכבד את לבו HE ALLOWED HIS HEART TO BE HARDENED — The word הַכְבֵּד expresses doing something (the Hebrew infinitive but having a past meaning) just as, (Genesis 12:9) "going (הלוך) and journeying (ונסוע)". So, too, (2 Kings 3:24) "and smiting (והכת) Moab"; (I Samuel 22:13) "and enquiring (ושאול) of God for him"; (1 Kings 20:37); "smiting (הכה) and wounding (ופצוע)".
כאשר דבר ה׳ AS THE LORD HAD SPOKEN — And where had He said this? When He said, (Exodus 7:4) "Pharaoh will not hearken to you".

Verse 12

אמר אל אהרן SAY UNTO AARON — The dust did not deserve to be smitten by Moses because it had protected him when he slew the Egyptian, for "he hid him in the sand"; and it was therefore smitten by Aaron (Tanchuma; Exodus Rabbah 10:7).

Verse 13

ותהי הכנם means the swarming was. In old French pedulier.

Verse 14

להוציא את הכנים TO BRING FORTH GNATS — to create them and to bring them forth from some other place (not from dust but to turn some other material into gnats).

ולא יכלו BUT THEY COULD NOT — for the demon (through whose agency this was to be done) is powerless in the case of a creature smaller than a barley corn) (Sanhedrin 67b). Therefore they had to admit,

Verse 15

אצבע אלהים הוא THIS IS THE FINGER OF GOD — This plague is not caused by sorcery: it is of the Omnipresent God!
כאשר דבר ה׳ AS THE LORD HAD SPOKEN — when He said, (Exodus 7:4) "Pharaoh will not hearken unto you".

Verse 16

Verse 17

משליח בך means I WILL INCITE AGAINST THEE. Another example is. (Deuteronomy 32:24) "I will incite (אשלח) the tooth of beasts against them", where it signifies letting loose an animal against a person; old French inciter. English to incite.
את הערב this means all kinds of wild beasts, serpents, and scorpions (a mixture [ערב] of noxious creatures) in a crowd (Exodus Rabbah 11:3) — these played havoc with them. There is a reason given in the Midrash in the case of each plague why this particular one and why that: God came against them with the tactics of warlike operations as carried out by kings in orderly sequence: a government (monarch) who is besieging a city first destroys its water supply, then they blow the trumpets and sound an alarm in order to terrify and dismay them — thus [their water supply was turned into blood], the frogs croaked and made a noise etc. - just as you will find it stated in the Midrash of Rabbi Tanchuma 2:3:4.

Verse 18

והפליתי means I WILL SEPARATE. Similar is, (Exodus 9:4) "And the Lord will make a separation (והפלה)"; so, also, (Deuteronomy 30:11) "It is not נפלאת from thee" — that is, "it is not separated and set at a far distance from thee".
למען תדע כי אני ה׳ בקרב הארץ IN ORDER THAT THOU MAYEST KNOW THAT I AM THE ETERNAL IN THE MIDST OF THE EARTH — although My Shechina is in the heavens My command is fulfilled amongst mankind (as we might say, "My writ runs on earth also").

Verse 19

ושמתי פדות AND I WILL MAKE A DELIVERANCE which shall serve as a division BETWEEN MY PEOPLE AND THY PEOPLE.

Verse 20

תשחת הארץ means the ground was being destroyed (the imperfect tense denotes what was then going on continuously), and so the Targum has אתחבלת ארעא (the participle) the ground was being ruined.

Verse 21

זבחו לאלהיכם בארץ SACRIFICE TO YOUR GOD IN THE LAND, in the place where you are, and do not go into the wilderness.

Verse 22

תועבת מצרים THE ABOMINATION OF THE EGYPTIANS — This means: that which the Egyptians reverence (their idol), just as, (2 Kings 23:13) "and for Milcom the abomination (תועבת) of the children of Ammon", but in relation to the Israelites it (Scripture) calls it תועבה. We may explain these words in another sense also: תועבת מצרים — The act of sacrifice which we practise is a hateful thing to the Egyptians seing that we sacrifice their god (sheep which were reverenced as gods in Egypt).
ולא יסקלנו — This must be read in the intonation of a question (although there is no interrogative prefix הֲ) AND WILL THEY NOT STONE US?

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

התל is the same as להתל (i. e. the infinitive may be used with or without ל prefixed).

Verse 26

ויעתר אל ה׳ AND ENTREATED THE LORD (the verb is the Kal) — he concentrated his energies on prayer. So, too, if it had wished to use the term וַיַּעְתֵּר (the Hiphil) it could have used it, and that would have signified, "and he increased words in prayer". But when it uses an expression denoting "and he did something" (the Kal) it signifies "he prayed much (devoutly)".

Verse 27

ויסר הערב AND HE REMOVED THE SWARM OF ANIMALS — He merely removed them and they did not die as the frogs had died; for had they died, they (the Egyptians) could have made some use of their skins (Exodus Rabbah 11:3).

Verse 28

Again this time. [Once more,] though he said, "I will send you out," he did not keep his promise.

Chapter 9

Verse 1

Verse 2

מחזיק בם means WILT KEEP HOLD OF THEM, as in, (Deuteronomy 25:11) "and layeth hold of him etc. (...והחזיקה ב)".

Verse 3

הנה יד ה׳ הוֹיָה BEHOLD THE HAND OF THE LORD IS — The verb הויה is in the present tense, for so one says in the feminine gender of the past היתה, "she was", of the future, תהיה, "she will be" and of the present, הוֹיָה, the latter form being similar to עוֹשָׂה and רוֹעָה and רוֹצָה (Fem. part. sing. Kal of ה"ל verbs).

Verse 4

והפלה means HE WILL SEPARATE.

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

מלא חפניכם HANDFULS (more lit., as much as will fill your fists), old French joincheiz; Engl, double-handfuls.
פיח הכבשן SOOT OF THE FURNACE — the word פיח denotes a thing which is blown away (נפוח) from coals that have become extinguished after being burnt in a furnace; in old French oulvis.
פיח is derived from a root that signifies blowing, and it so called because the wind blows it about and scatters it abroad.
וזרקו משה AND LET MOSES THREW IT — Since anything which is thrown with force must be thrown with one hand only, there were here several miracles: one, that Moses' closed fingers (קמץ) held as much as would fill his two fists and those of Aaron, and another, that this dust spread itself over the entire land of Egypt (Midrash Tanchuma, Vaera 14; Exodus Rabbah 11:8).

Verse 9

לשחין פרח אבעבעת A BOIL BREAKING FORTH INTO BLAINS — Render it as the Targum does: a boil growing blains, — the idea is, that through it (the boil) blains burst out on them (on the people).
שחין has the meaning of "heat". In the Mishnaic Hebrew there are many examples of its use; e. g., (Yoma 53b) "a hot (שחונה) year".

Verse 10

באדם ובבהמה UPON MAN AND UPON CATTLE — If you ask, "Whence did they obtain these cattle"? Has it not already been stated, (v. 6) "And all the cattle of Egypt died"? I reply that this judgment was decreed only against the cattle that were in the fields, as it is said, (v. 3) "[The hand of the Lord is] upon thy cattle which is in the field", and everyone who feared the Lord took his cattle in-doors. So it is taught in the Mechilta in the comment on (Exodus 14:7) "And he took six hundred chosen chariots."

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

את כל מגפתי [FOR I WILL THIS TIME SEND] ALL MY PLAGUES — We may gather from this that the plague on the first ripe ears outweighed all the previous plagues.

Verse 15

כי עתה שלחתי את ידי וגו׳ FOR NOW I MIGHT HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HAND etc. — For had I so desired it, when My hand was upon thy cattle which I smote with pestilence I could have stretched it forth and smitten thee and thy people together with the cattle, ותכחד מן הארץ AND THOU WOULDST HAVE BEEN EXTERMINATED FROM THE EARTH, BUT (this word אבל corresponds to ואולם in the Hebrew text) בעבור זאת העמדתיך FOR THIS REASON I MADE THEE REMAIN [IN LIFE IN ORDER TO SHOW THEE MY POWER], etc.

Verse 16

Verse 17

עודך מסתולל בעמי Understand this as the Targum does: THOU TREADEST DOWN MY PEOPLE. The word מסתולל is of the same derivation as מְסִלָּה which we render in the Targum by "a trodden path": old French caucher. I have already explained at the end of Sedrah ויהי מקץ (see Rashi on Genesis 44:16) that in the case of every word (verb) whose first root letter is ס (or ש), when it is intended to express the idea of acting upon itself (our Hithpael conjugation) one puts the ת of the prefix (הִתְ or מִת or יִתְ etc.) between the root letters, just as in this case, and as in, (Ecclesiastes 12:5) ''and the grasshopper shall drag itself along heavily (ויסתבל)" which is derived from סבל "to carry a load"; (Numbers 16:13) "that thou wouldst make thyself altogether a prince (השתרר תשתרר) over us", of the same derivation as the word שר in (II Chronicles 32:21) "a prince (שר) and noble"; (Daniel 7:8) ''I was considering (מסתכל)" from the root סכל, "to reflect on."

Verse 18

כעת מחר means AT THIS TIME (כָּעֵת not כְּעֵת) TO-MORROW — He scratched a mark on the wall, saying, "To-morrow when the sun-rays reach here the hail will descend" (Exodus Rabbah 12:2; cf. Rashi on Genesis 21:2). הוסדה means [FROM THE DAY] WHEN IT WAS FOUNDED (נתיסדה). Every word (verb) the first root-letter of which is י, as ידע and ילד and יסד and יסר, when it is used in the Hithpael sense (Rashi means our Niphal which often is the reflexive of the Kal), a ו replaces this י; e. g., הוסדה here, from יסד; (Hosea 2:5) "her being born (הֻוָלְדָה)"; (Esther 2:22) "and it was known (ויודע)"; (Genesis 66:20) "and there was born (ויולד) to Joseph"; (Proverbs 29:19) A servant will not be corrected (יוסר) by words".

Verse 19

שלח העז translate it as the Targum: SEND, GATHER. Similar examples of this sense are, (Isaiah 10:31) "The inhabitants of Gebim gather together (העיזו)"; (Jeremiah 6:1) "Gather together (העיזו), ye children of Benjamin".
ולא יאסף הביתה The verb denotes "bringing into a place" so that the translation is: AND WHICH IS NOT GATHERED INTO THE HOUSE.

Verse 20

הניס means HE MADE THEM FLEE.

Verse 21

Verse 22

על השמים signifies towards the heavens (i. e. על is the equivalent of אל). A Midrashic comment is that the Holy One, blessed be He, raised Moses high above the heavens see Midrash Tanchuma, Vaera 15).

Verse 23

Verse 24

מתלקחת בתוך הברד [AND FIRE] FLASHING UP AMIDST THE HAIL — a miracle within a miracle! Fire and hail mingled, although hail is water! But in order to perform the will of their Creator they made peace one with the other (Exodus Rabbah 12:4).

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

ורב AND IT IS ENOUGH — let it suffice Him with what He has brought down already.

Verse 29

כצאתי את העיר — This is the same as מן העיר [AS SOON AS I AM GONE OUT] FROM THE CITY. But he did not pray within the city because it was full of idols (Exodus Rabbah 12:5).

Verse 30

טרם תראון means YE DO NOT YET FEAR. Wherever occurs in Scripture it signifies "not yet", and does not mean "before". For example: (Genesis 19:4) טרם ישכבו, which the Targum renders by "whilst yet they had not lain down"; (Genesis 2:5) טרם יצמח which the Targum renders by "not yet sprung forth". This, too, has the same meaning: I know that ye do not yet fear the Lord, and that as soon as there will be respite you will continue in your moral corruption.

Verse 31

והפשתה והשערה נכתה AND THE FLAX AND THE BARLEY נכתה — i. e. were broken; it has the same meaning as in, (2 Kings 23:29) "Pharaoh-Necho (נכה)", which denotes Pharaoh the lame i. e. broken in so far as the power of his legs is concerned (cf. II Samuel 9:3); (Isaiah 16:7) "brocken (נכאים)", and so too לא נכו (v. 32), "they were not broken". It would not be correct to explain that it is connected in meaning with the word that signifies "smiting", הכאה, for a נ cannot take the place of a ה that one may explain נֻכָּתָה as being equivalent to הֻכָּתָה, and נֻכּוּ to הֻכּוּ, but the נ is a root-letter in the verb, and the word נֻכּוּ is of the same grammatical form as the verb in, (Job. 33:21) "and all his bones are laid bare" שֻׁפּוּ (i. e. Pual of כי השערה אביב
כי השערה אביב FOR THE BARLEY WAS IN THE EAR — it had produced its first ears and it stood on its stalks; these were therefore broken and fell. So, too, the flax had already grown and had become hard enough to stand in its capsules.
השערה אביב means [THE BARLEY] STOOD IN RIPE STATE, similar in meaning to, (Song 6:11) "[to look at] the ripe plants (באבי) of the valley".

Verse 32

כי אפילת הנה means FOR THEY WERE LATE in growing and they were still soft and able to resist the blow of anything hard. It is true that it is stated, (v. 25) "and every herb of the field did the hail smite", but one must explain the real meaning of that verse as referring to herbs that stood on their stalks and were therefore liable to be broken by the hail. In the Midrash of Rabbi Tanchuma 2:2:16 some of our Rabbis differed in their explanation of this, and explained the words כי אפילת to signify that most remarkable wonders (פלאי פלאות) happened to them in that they were not smitten.

Verse 33

לא נתך means [RAIN] DID NOT REACH the earth (i. e. no fresh rain came down) — that rain, too, which was alredy in the air at the moment when Moses was praying remained there and did not reach the ground. In a similar sense is "ותתך עלינו the curse and the oath" — a passage in the book of Ezra (really, Daniel 9:11) — which signifies, "the curse and the oath have reached us". But Menachem ben Seruk classified it in the same section as, (Ezekiel 22:22) "כהתוך כסף" which has the meaning of melting (pouring forth) metal. I agree with his opinion, because in the Targum we render ויצק, (Onkelos Exodus 38:5) "And he cast (metal)", by ואתיך, and (Onkelos Exodus 38:27) לצקת, "to cast (metal)" by לאתכא, each of these Aramaic words being of the same root as our word נתך. Therefore לא נתך ארצה would mean: rain was not poured out to the ground.

Chapter 10

Verse 1

ויאמר ה' אל משה בא אל פרעה AND THE LORD SAID UNTO MOSES GO IN UNTO PHARAOH and warn him.
שתי means my setting (an infinitive of שית), so that the phrase, which literally means "for the sake of my setting these my signs", denotes "that I may set".

Verse 2

התעללתי means I HAVE MOCKED, as in, (Numbers 22:29) "Because thou hast mocked (התעללת) me"; (I Samuel 6:6) "Indeed, when he mocked (התעולל) them", which, also, is said in reference to Egypt. It is not an expression denoting doing and action, for were this so it should have written עוללתי, similar to (Lamentations 1:22) "And do (עולל) unto them as thou hast done (עוללת) unto me", and to (Lamentations 1:12) "which he has done (עולל) unto me".

Verse 3

לענת Translate as the Targum: TO BE HUMBLED. It is of the same derivation as ענו poor, so that the passage signifies, "thou refusest to be poor and lowly before Me".

Verse 4

Verse 5

את עין הארץ means THE COLOUR OF THE GROUND.
ולא יוכל AND HE — i. e. anyone who is looking — WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SEE THE EARTH; it speaks in (uses) an elliptical expression.

Verse 6

Verse 7

הטרם תדע means KNOWEST THOU NOT YET that Egypt has perished. (Cf. Rashi on Exodus 9:30.)

Verse 8

ויושב [AND MOSES AND AARON] WERE BROUGHT BACK (The verb has a passive meaning [Hophal], not an active as the particle את before משה and אהרן might lead one to suppose) — They were brought back by a messenger: they (Pharaoh's servants) sent people after them and these brought them back to Pharaoh.

Verse 9

Verse 10

כאשר אשלח אתכם ואת טפכם [MAY THE LORD BE WITH YOU] AS I WILL LET YOU AND YOUR LITTLE ONES GO — even though I were to let go also the flocks and herds as you have said.

ראו כי רעה נגד פניכם Understand this as the Targum takes it: See, the evil you are about to do wilt turn against yourself. I have heard a Midrashic explanation: There is a certain star the name of which is רעה "Evil". Pharaoh said to them, "By my astrological art I see that star rising towards you in the wilderness whither you wish to proceed. It is an emblem of blood and slaughter". Consequently, when Israel sinned by worshipping the calf and the Holy One, blessed be He, intended to slay them, Moses said in his prayer, (Exodus 32:12) "Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, He brought them forth together with רעה (i. e. under the influence of the star רעה); this is, indeed, what he (Pharaoh) has already said, "See, the 'רעה' is before you". At once, "the Lord bethought Himself concerning 'רעה'", and He changed the blood of which this star was an emblem to the blood of the circumcision because indeed Joshua had them circumcised. This is the meaning of what is said, (Joshua 5:9). "This day have I rolled from off you the reproach of the Egyptians", for they said to you. "We see blood impending over you in the wilderness. (Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 1:392; cf. also Rashi on Joshua 5:9.)

Verse 11

לא כן NOT SO as you have said, to take the children with you, but לכו נא הגברים ועבדו את ה GO YE WHO ARE ADULT MEN AND SERVE THE LORD.
כי אתה אתם מבקשים means FOR THAT IS WHAT YE DID SEEK till now: let us sacrifice to our God — and it is not the custom for little children to offer sacrifice.
ויגרש אותם AND HE DROVE THEM OUT — This is an elliptical phrase and it does not expressly state who drove them out (i. e. the subject of the verb is omitted).

Verse 12

בארבה means on account of the plague of locusts (the prefix ב signifies "on account of").

Verse 13

ורוח הקדים THE EAST WIND — It was an east wind that brought the locusts because that came (blew) from the direction opposite to it (to Egypt), since Egypt was in the south-west, relative to Palestine, as it is explained in another place (Numbers 34:3).

Verse 14

ואחריו לא יהיה כן NEITHER AFTER THEM SHALL BE SUCH — That plague of locusts which happened during the days of Joel of which it is said, (Joel 2:2) "there hath not been ever the like" — which statement teaches us that it was more grievous than that in the days of Moses — was, however, caused by many species of locusts, together, those called ארבה and ילק and חסיל and גזם; but that which happened in the days of Moses consisted of only one species (the ארבה) and any ארבה like that there never was and never will be.

Verse 15

כל ירק means any green leaf (not "any herb", since it speaks of the ירק of the trees); old French verdure.

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

ים רוח is A WEST WIND.
ימה סוף INTO THE RED SEA — I say that the Red Sea was, as to part of it, in the west opposite the whole southern side of Palestine, and was also eastward of the Land of Israel; therefore a west wind blew the locusts into the Red Sea which was in the opposite direction to the west of Egypt. Thus do we find mentioned regarding the boundaries of Palestine that it (the Red Sea) faces the east of Palestine, since it states, (Exodus 23:31) "[And I will set thy boundaries] from the Red Sea even unto the sea of the Philistines", which means from east to west since the sea of the Philistines was in the west, as it is said of the Philistines, (Zephaniah 2:5) "the inhabitants of the sea-coast, the nation of the Cherethites (the Philistines)".
לא נשאר ארבה אחד THERE REMAINED NOT ONE LOCUST — not even those which they had salted — for they had salted some of them (Exodus Rabbah 13:7).

Verse 20

Verse 21

וימש חשך signifies and it (the darkness mentioned in the preceding phrase, ויהי חשך) shall darken for them the natural darkness to a higher degree than the darkness of night: i. e. the darkness of night shall become even more black and dark.
וימש means as much as (is a contraction of) ויאמש (a Hiphil form of אמש, evening darkness). We have many words in which an א is omitted; since the sound of the א is not very marked, Scripture is not particular about omitting it. An example is: (Isaiah 13:20) "the Arabian לֹא יַהֵל there", which is the same as לֹא יַאֲהֵל, shall not pitch his tent. Similar is, (II Samuel 22:40) "וַתְּזָרְנִי with strength", which is the same as וַתְּאַזְּרֵנִי "And thou hast girded me" (cf. Psalms 30:12). Onkelos translated it in the sense of removing, from the same root as, (Joshua 1:8) "it shall not depart (ימוש)", his rendering being, "[and there shall be darkness..] after the darkness of night has departed", i. e. when the time approaches near to the light of day. But the statement does not then fit with the ו of וימש, because this word is written after ויהי חשך. A Midrashic statement explains it in the sense of (Deuteronomy 28:29) "groping (ממשש feeling) at noon-day", so that the meaning would be that it was of such a double character and so thick that there was something tangible in it (Exodus Rabbah 14:1-3).

Verse 22

שלשת ימים denotes a triad of days. old French terziane; so, too, שבעת ימים everywhere it occurs denotes in old French a septaine of days (a period of seven days).

וְיִהִי חֹשֶׁךְ אֲפֵלָה … שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים — there was darkness of gloom when no man saw another during those three days, and there was moreover another period of three days' darkness twice as thick as this when no man rose from his place: one who happened to be sitting when this second period of darkness began was unable to rise, and one who was then standing was unable to sit down. And why did He bring darkness upon them? Because there were wicked people amongst the Israelites of that generation who had no desire to leave Egypt, and these died during the three days of darkness so that the Egyptians might not see their destruction and say, "These, (the Israelites) too have been stricken as we have". And a further reason is that the Israelites searched (the darkness came just in order that they might do this) and saw their (the Egyptians') jewels, and when they were leaving Egypt and asked them for their jewels, and they replied, "We have none at all in our possession", they answered them, "I have seen it in your house and it is in such and such a place" (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Bo 1; Exodus Rabbah 14:3).

Verse 23

Verse 24

יצג means SHALL REMAIN STANDING in its place.

Verse 25

גַּם אַתָּה תִתֵּן THOU MUST GIVE ALSO — It will not be enough for you that our cattle will go with us but you will give also of yours.

Verse 26

פרסה is the hoof of the foot; in old French plante.
לֹא נֵדַע מַה נַּעֲבֹד means WE DO NOT KNOW WITH WHAT WE MUST SERVE we do not know how heavy will be the service: perhaps He will ask more than we have in our possession.

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

כֵּן דִּבַּרְתָּ signifies RIGHTLY HAST THOU SPOKEN, and in its proper time hast thou spoken; for it is true that I will not see thy face again (Mekhilta; Exodus Rabbah 18:1; cf. also Onkelos).

Chapter 11

Verse 1

כלה Onkelos renders it by גמירא, taking כלה in sense of כליל entirely; i. e. he will send all of you away.

Verse 2

דבר נא SPEAK נא — The word נא is always an expression of entreaty. Here it means: I entreat you, admonish them about this which follows (impress this injunction upon them), so that righteous man, Abraham, may not say: the prophecy (Genesis 15:13) "they shall serve them, and they shall afflict them" He permitted to be fulfilled in them, but the promise (Genesis 15:14) "and afterwards they shall go forth with great substance" He did not bring to fulfilment for them (Berakhot 9a-b).

Verse 3

Verse 4

ויאמר משה כה אמר ה AND MOSES SAID, THUS SAITH THE LORD — Whilst he was still standing before Pharaoh this prophecy was spoken to him, because after he left him, he did not see his face again (Exodus Rabbah 18:1).
כחצות הלילה means, WHEN THE NIGHT IS DIVIDED (i. e., when midnight arrives). כחצות is an infinitive with prefix, of similar form to, (1 Kings 18:36) בעלות, "when went up" and (Psalms 124:3) "when their wrath was kindled (בחרות)". This is its literal meaning which fits in with the sense, for חצות is not a noun, being another form of חֲצִי (when the meaning would be about midnight I will go out etc.", for this does not fit in with the sense, since God would certainly have stated exactly when He would do this). But our Rabbis took it in this sense and explained it as meaning "about the middle of the night", and they asserted that Moses said כחצות "about midnight", which implies near to it — either just before it or just after it, and he did not say בחצות "at midnight" (as God had bidden him say) because he feared lest Pharaoh's astrologers might make a mistake as regards the time when the slaughter of the firstborn actually took place, thinking that it was a little earlier or later than midnight, and would say, in consequence of this error, "Moses is a liar!" (cf. Berakhot 4a).

Verse 5

עד בכור השבי UNTO THE FIRSTBORN OF THE CAPTIVE (these words are used in 12:29 instead of עד בכור השפחה "unto the firstborn of the handmaid" in this verse) — Why were the captives smitten, for they had not enslaved the Israelites? In order that these might not say that their god had claimed satisfaction for the humiliation imposed upon them and had brought this punishment upon the Egyptians (cf. Mekhilta).
מבכור פרעה עד בכור השפחה FROM THE FIRSTBORN OF PHARAOH UNTO THE FIRSTBORN OF THE HANDMAID — All who were of less importance than the firstborn of Pharaoh and of more importance than the firstborn of the handmaid are included in this description. And why were the sons of the handmaids stricken? Because they, too, treated them (the Israelites) as slaves and rejoiced at their misery (Midrash Tanchuma, Bo 7).
וכל בכור בהמה AND ALL THE FIRSTBORN OF BEASTS — because they worshipped these as gods. When the Holy One, blessed be He, exacts punishment from a nation, He punishes their gods at the same time (Genesis Rabbah 96:5).

Verse 6

Verse 7

לא יחרץ כלב לשנו NO DOG SHALL חרץ HIS TONGUE — I say that it has the meaning of sharpening: "no dog shall whet his tongue". So, too: (Joshua 10:21) "לא חרץ his tongue against any of the children of Israel", i. e. "none whetted"; (II Samuel 5:24) "then תחרץ" — then thou shalt utter a sharp sound; (Isaiah 41:15) "a threshing-sledge חרוץ" i. e. sharp; (Proverbs 21:5) "the plans of a חרוץ" — of "an acute and sharp man"; (Proverbs 10:4) "the hand of the חרוצים maketh rich", i. e. the hand of the acute — of sharp merchants.
אשר יפלה meant THAT HE MAKETH A DIFFERENCE.

Verse 8

וירדו כל עבדיך AND ALL THY SERVENTS SHALL COME DOWN [UNTO ME] — He showed respect to the king, for as a matter of fact ultimately Pharaoh himself came down to him at night, (Exodus 12:31) "And he said, Arise, go out from the midst of my people"; but Moses did not at the outset say to him, "And thou shalt come down to me and shalt prostrate thyself", out of respect for the king, (Exodus Rabbah 7:3)
אשר ברגליך (lit., who are at thy feet) — who go after (follow) thy counsel and ways.
ואחרי כן אצא AND AFTER THAT I WILL GO OUT, with all my people, from thy land.
ויצא מעם פרעה AND HE WENT OUT FROM PHARAOH — After he had concluded his words he went forth from his presence.
בחרי אף IN FIERCENESS OF WRATH because he (Pharaoh) had said to him, (Exodus 10:28) "Do not again see my face.

Verse 9

למען רבות מופתי SO THAT MY WONDERS MAY BE MULTIPLIED (more lit., so that my wonders may be many) — referring not to one wonder alone (the slaying of the firstborn) but to the slaying of the firstborn, the division of the Red Sea and the overthrowing of the Egyptians in it.

Verse 10

ומשה ואהרן עשו וגו׳ AND MOSES AND AARON DID etc. — It (Scripture) has already written this in the description of all the preceding wonders, and it repeats it here only in order to connect it with the chapter which comes after this (as giving a reason why the commands in the next chapter were given to Aaron as well as to Moses; cf. Rashi's comment on the following verse).

Chapter 12

Verse 1

ויאמר ה' אל משה ואל אהרן AND THE LORD SPAKE UNTO MOSES AND AARON — Because Aaron had worked and toiled in performing the wonders just the same as Moses He paid him this honour at the first command by including him with Moses in the communication (Tanchuma Yahshan 2:3:8).
בארץ מצרים IN THE LAND OF EGYPT — This must have been outside the city! Or perhaps this is not so, but it was inside the city? Scripture however states, (Exodus 9:29) "When I leave the city [I will spread my hands (pray) unto the Lord]". Now how was it in regard to prayer which is of light importance in comparison with a communication from God? He did not recite the prayer inside the city! Then, in the case of a divine communication which is of so weighty importance does it not follow all

the more that this was also so! — And why, indeed, did He not converse with him inside the city? Because it was full of idols (Mekhilta).

Verse 2

החדש הזה — He showed him the moon in the first stage of its renewal, and He said to him, "The time when the moon renews itself thus, shall be unto you the beginning of the month". (The translation therefore is: "This stage of renewal (חדש) shall be the moment of beginning the months"; cf. Mekhilta). But no Scriptural verse can lose its literal meaning, and He really spoke this in reference to the month Nisan: this month shall be the beginning in the order of counting the months, so that Iyar shall be called the second, Sivan the third.
הזה THIS [STAGE OF RENEWAL] — Moses was in perplexity regarding the Molad of (the exact moment when begins) the new moon — how much of it must be visible before it is proper to consecrate it as new moon: He therefore pointed it out to him in the sky with the finger and said to him, "Behold it like this, and consecrate it" (i. e., when you see the moon in a stage of renewal similar to this which you now behold you may proclaim that a new month has begun). But how could He point it out to him, for did He not converse with him only by day, as it is said, (Exodus 6:28) "And it came to pass on the day when the Lord spake [unto Moses]"; (Leviticus 7:38) "On the day when he commanded"; (Numbers 15:23) "From the day that the Lord commanded and henceforward"? But the explanation is: This chapter was spoken to him close to sunset and He pointed it out to him at nightfall (more lit., near darkness) (Mekhilta).

Verse 3

דברו אל כל עדת SPEAK UNTO ALL THE CONGREGATION — But did Aaron speak? Has it not already been stated, (Exodus 7:2) "You (Moses) shall speak etc.". But the explanation is: they paid respect one to the other, saying to each other, "Instruct me what to say". and the divine communication in question issued from both of them, so that it was as though they were both speaking (Mekhilta).
דברו אל כל עדת ישראל לאמר בעשר לחדש i. e. SPEAK to-day — on the first of the month — THAT ON THE TENTH OF THE MONTH they should take it (the lamb) (Mekhilta).
הזה [ON THE TENTH OF] THIS [MONTH] — As regards the paschal lamb sacrificed in Egypt it had to be taken from the flock on the tenth, but this did not apply to the paschal-lamb offered by future generations (Pesachim 96a).
שה לבית אבות A LAMB FOR THE HOUSE OF THEIR FATHERS — i. e. a lamb for one family ("family" here means the larger unit comprising the father or grandfather with his married sons and their families). Consequently, if they (the members of such a family) were numerous, one might think that they may take one lamb for all of them (irrespective of whether this would suffice to provide a piece as large as an olive, the minimum quantity, for each person)! Therefore Scripture states: שה לבית A LAMB FOR EACH HOUSEHOLD (Mekhilta).

Verse 4

ואם ימעט הבית מהיות משה — This means: if they are too few to be sufficient for one lamb — that they are unable to eat the whole of it, and it would therefore come under the category of נותר "left over". ולקח הוא ושכנו וגו׳ THEN LET HIM AND HIS NEIGHBOUR TAKE etc. — This is what these words and those that precede it imply in its literal sense, but there is also a derivation from it of a Halachic character — that the verse intends to teach that after they have counted themselves (formed

themselves into a company) for it, they may reduce their number by withdrawing from it and may register themselves for a different lamb; but if they intend to withdraw and thereby reduce their number מהיות משה — they must reduce only whilst the lamb is still in being — whilst it is alive (מחיות משה = מהיות משה) — and not after it has been slaughtered (Pesachim 89a; cf. Mekhilta).
במכסת means ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER. Similar is, (Leviticus 27:23) "The number (מכסת) of thy valuation".
לפי אכלו [EVERY MAN] ACCORDING TO HIS EATING — every man who is fitted to eat the quantity prescribed by the Law; this excludes a sick person and an aged person who are unable to eat a portion the size of an olive (Mekhilta).
תכסו means ye shall number yourselves, as the Targum renders it. (It is not to be translated: ye shall number others.)

Verse 5

תמים PERFECT i. e. without blemish (Mekhilta).
בן שנה OF THE FIRST YEAR — the whole of its first year it is termed שנה בן, as much as to say, that it was born during this year (it does not mean that it is one year old — in its second year) (cf.Mekhilta).
מן הכבשים ומן העזים — i. e. either from these (a lamb) or from these (a goat) (i. e. the ו of ומן does not signify "and", but "or"); for a goat, also, is called שה, as it is said, (Deuteronomy 14:4) "the שה of the goats" (שה means the young animal, either of the sheep or of the goats) (cf. Mekhilta).

Verse 6

והיה לכם למשמרת AND IT SHALL BE IN YOUR KEEPING (or watching) — This expresses the idea of examining, and the text therefore implies that it requires examination against any blemish during the four days before slaughter (Pesachim 96a). And why did He order that it should be taken from the flock four days before its slaughter, something which He did not command in respect to the paschal-lamb that was offered by succeeding generations? Rabbi Mathia, the son of Cheresh, said, in answer: Behold, it (Scripture) says, (Ezekiel 16:8) "And I passed over thee (an allusion to God's passing over the Israelites in Egypt) and looked upon thee, and behold, thy time was the time of love" — there had arrived the time to fulfil the oath which I had sworn to Abraham to redeem his children. They, however, possessed no divine commands in which to engage in order that they should merit to be redeemed — as it is said (Ezekiel 16:7) "thou wast naked and bare" (i. e. bare of all merit earned through the fulfilment of God's commands). He therefore gave them two commands, relating respectively to the blood of the paschal-lamb and the blood of the circumcision — for that night they circumcised themselves, as it is said (Ezekiel 16:6) "[When I passed over thee] I saw thee wallowing in thy bloods (בְּדָמַיִךְ is plural)" i. e. in two kinds of blood. Further it states, (Zechariah 9:11) "As for thee, also, because of the blood of the covenant I released thy prisoners out of the pit wherin there is no water". And yet another reply to this question is, that because they were sunk in idolatry and had no merit gained by the practice of a divine command, He said unto them, (v. 21) משכו "Draw" — withdraw your hands from idols; וקחו לכם צאן "and take unto yourselves a lamb" to fulfil a divine command (Mekhilta).
ושחטו אתו וגו׳ AND THEY SHALL SLAUGHTER IT etc. — But did they all slaughter it (one alone did this on behalf of the company formed to eat that particular lamb; cf. Chullin 29b)? But we derive from this statement the legal principle that a man's agent is as himself (this is derived from the fact that although one alone slaughtered the lamb on behalf of

many, Scripture still states: they shall slaughter it) (Mekhilta; Kiddushin 41b).
קהל עדת ישראל it speaks here of קהל assembly, עדה congregation, ישראל Israel, whilst one of these terms alone would have sufficed; hence they (the Rabbis) said: the paschal-lambs of the congregation (a term used in contrast to that which was sacrificed by an individual on the 14th of the second month; cf. Numbers 9:9—14) are to be slaughtered in three groups, one after the other — the first group entered and the doors of the court were closed, etc. as is to be found in the Talmud, Treatise Pesachim (64a).
בין הערבים AT EVENTIDE — The period beginning at six hours (reckoning from six o'clock in the morning) and hence forward is called בין הערבים (Mekhilta), because the sun then inclines in the direction of the place of its setting to become darkened. The expression בין הערבים appears to me to denote those hours which are between the darkening of the day and the darkening of the night. The darkening of the day is at the beginning of the seventh hour in the day, from when the shadows of evening decline; and the darkening of the night is at the commencement of the night (this period is therefore from noon until the beginning of night). The word ערב is an expression for gloom and darkness, as in (Isaiah 24:11). "All joy is darkened".

Verse 7

ולקחו מן הדם AND THEY SHALL TAKE OF THE BLOOD — This refers to the ritual reception of the blood. One might think that they must take it in the hand; therefore Scripture states, (v. 22) "[and ye shall dip it in the blood] which is in the basin (Mekhilta).
המזוזת THE SIDE POSTS — These are the upright posts, one on this side of the entrance and one on that side.
המשקוף THE LINTEL — This is the upper post upon which the door beats (שוקף) when it is being closed; old French lintel. The expression שקף (from which משקוף lintel is derived) denotes beating, as may be seen from the Targum on, (Leviticus 26:36) "the sound of a leaf that is beaten (by another)", which Onkelos renders by דשקיף; and from the Targum on, (Exodus 21:25) חַבּוּרָה "wheal" (a beaten spot), where משקופי is the rendering.
אל הבתים אשר יאכלו אתו בהם ON THE HOUSES WHEREIN THEY SHALL EAT IT — and not upon the lintel and the doorposts which are in the place used for storing straw or in the stalls of oxen, in which people do not live and eat. (Cf. Mekhilta and הגהות הגר"א thereon).

Verse 8

את הבשר AND THEY SHALL EAT] THE FLESH — but not the sinews and bones (Mekhilta).
ומצות על מררים AND UNLEAVENED BREAD WITH מררים — Every bitter herb is called מרור. He commanded them to eat something bitter as a reminder of: (Exodus 1:14) "And they made their lives bitter" (Pesachim 116b).

Verse 9

אל תאכלו ממנו נא DO NOT EAT OF IT HALF-DONE — flesh that is not roasted as much as it should be is called נא in the Arabic language (cf. Pesachim 41a).
ובשל מבשל NOR SODDEN AT ALL — All this belongs to the prohibition, "Do not eat of it" (The text is, therefore, to be translated as above, and not: Do not eat of it half done, but boiled etc. The words אל תאכלו are to be supplied before בשל and כי אם צלי אש) (Pesachim 41b).

במים [BOILED] IN WATER — Whence may it be deduced that this prohibition extends to other liquids also? Because Scripture states here ובשל מבשל, "or boiled at all" (Pesachim 41a.).
כי אם צלי אש BUT ROAST WITH FIRE — Above (in the preceding verse) Scripture promulgates the law regarding this in the form of an affirmative command; here it adds to that a negative command: Do not eat of it … except roasted by fire. (Consequently one who eats of it in in any manner except roasted by fire is liable to the punishment laid down for transgressing a negative command as well as to that for the infringement of a positive command) (Pesachim 41b).
ראשו על כרעיו ITS HEAD WITH ITS LEGS — One roasts it all in one, with its head and with its legs and with its inward parts, and one places its entrails inside it after having rinsed them (Pesachim 74a). The expression על קרבו, is like the expression, (Exodus 6:26) "על צבאותם", which is the same as בצבאותם, "with their hosts", which means, "just as they are" (every one of the Israelites). So, too, this phrase means: they shall roast the flesh just as it is — all its flesh, whole.

Verse 10

והנתר ממנו עד בקר AND THAT WHICH REMAINETH OF IT UNTIL THE MORNING — What does Scripture intend to teach by stating עד בקר a second time? It intends to add an earlier stage of morning to the stage of morning already mentioned: because the term morning usually signifies the period beginning with sun-rise, and Scripture here intends to advance the hour and forbid eating it even from the break of day. This is the explanation according to what the text really implies. And there is still another Halacha derived from it: it teaches that it is not to be burnt on the festival itself but on the following day, and this is how you must explain it: "[and ye shall not leave anything of it until the morning]"; והנתר ממנו "and as regards that which is left of it" unto that first morning (עד בקר), until the second morning shalt thou wait, and then shalt thou burn it (Mekhilta; Pesachim 83b; Shabbat 24b).

Verse 11

מתניכם חגרים YOUR LOINS GIRDED — i. e. prepared for the journey (Mekhilta).
בחפזון — This is an expression denoting hurry and haste, similar to, (I Samuel 23:26) "And David made haste (נחפז) to get away"; (2 Kings 7:15) "which the Arameans had cast away in their haste"
פסח הוא לה IT IS THE PASSOVER OF THE LORD — The offering is called פסח in allusion to the springing and passing over — because the Holy One, blessed be He, passed over the houses of the Israelites in between the houses of the Egyptians and sprang from Egyptian to Egyptian, whilst the Israelite who was between them escaped. The words "And ye shall eat it in haste for it is a 'springing'-offering to the Lord" imply: Ye, therefore, do every act of sacrificial service connected with it (with the Paschal lamb) in honour of Heaven (God) by way of springing and leaping over (i. e. hastily), as a reminder of its name, which is called, the "springing"-offering. In old French, (Provencal) too, Pascua (the term for the Passover festival) signifies stepping over.

Verse 12

ועברתי AND I WILL PASS — This is not to be taken literally, but is speaks of God as one speaks of a king who passes from place to place (Mekhilta) but in this case all were punished at a single passage and in one moment.
כל בכור בארץ מצרים ALL THE FIRSTBORN IN THE LAND OF EGYPT — also the first-born of other nations who happened then to be in Egypt. And whence

may we deduce that the first-born of the Egyptians who happened to be in other countries also died? From what Scripture states: (Psalms 136:10) "To Him that smote the Egyptians in their first-born" (an unqualified statement) (Mekhilta).
מאדם עד בהמה FROM MAN TO BEAST — He who first began the wrongdoing, from him began the punishment (Mekhilta).
ובכל אלהי מצרים AND AGAINST ALL THE GODS OF EGYPT [WILL I EXECUTE JUDGEMENTS] — An idol of wood rotted, and one of metal melted and was poured out on the ground (cf. Mekhilta)).
אעשה שפטים אני ה I WILL EXECUTE JUDGEMENTS, I, THE LORD — I, Myself, and not by means of a messenger (Pesikta Zotarta).

Verse 13

והיה הדם לכם לאת AND THE BLOOD SHALL BE UNTO YOU FOR A SIGN — it shall be to you for a sign, and not to others for a sign (Mekhilta). From this we may learn that they put the blood only inside their houses.
וראיתי את הדם AND WHEN I SEE THE BLOOD — But surely everything is manifest to Him and He therefore did not need to look whether the blood had been put on the door-posts? But the meaning is: God says, I will set My eye (my attention) to take notice of the fact that you are engaged in the performance of My commands — then will I pass over you (Mekhilta).
ופסחתי — This signifies I WILL SPARE you; similar to this is, (Isaiah 31:5) "Sparing (פסוח) and delivering". (This is the explanation of Menachem ben Seruk). But I say that wherever the root פסח occurs it is an expression for leaping and springing over, so that ופסחתי here denotes that He sprang from the houses of the Israelites when He reached them, without having entered them, to the houses of the Egyptians — for they (the Egyptians and the Israelites) dwelt one next to the other. Of a like import is, (1 Kings 18:21) "How long will ye leap (פוסחים) upon two twigs?" So, too, all פסחים lame people walk as though they were springing, and are therefore termed פסחים. This, too, is the meaning of, (Isaiah 31:5) פסוח והמליט "He springs over him and delivers him" from amongst those who are being killed.
ולא יהיה בכם נגף AND THE INFLICTION SHALL NOT BE UPON YOU — but it will be upon the Egyptians. — In the case that an Egyptian was in an Israelite's house one might think that he would escape! Therefore Scripture says: "and the infliction shall not be upon you", but it shall be upon the Egyptians who happen to be in your houses! In the case that an Israelite was in an Egyptians house, I might understand from this that he would be smitten just the same as he (the Egyptian)! Therefore Scripture says, "and the affliction shall not be upon you", wherever you may happen to be (Mekhilta).

Verse 14

לזכרון [AND THIS DAY SHALL BE UNTO YOU] FOR A MEMORIAL — in future generations (i. e. in the future).
וחגתם אתו AND YE SHALL CELEBRATE IT AS A FEAST— Scripture states: the day that is to serve you as a memorial, that day thou shalt celebrate as a feast, but we have not yet heard which is the day that is to be a memorial; therefore Scripture says (Exodus 13:3) "Remember (זכור) this day in which ye went out" and this teaches us that the day of the Exodus itself is the day which is to be the memorial (זכרון). Now, on which day did they go forth? Scripture states, (Numbers 33:3) "On the morrow after the Passover-sacrifice they went forth". Thus you must say that the day of the fifteenth of Nisan is that of the Feast, for on the night of the fifteenth (i. e. what we would term the night following the day of the fourteenth) they ate the Passover-sacrifice, and consequently on the next morning they went forth (Mekhilta).

לדרתיכם וגו׳ [YE SHALL CELEBRATE IT] FOR YOUR GENERATIONS etc. — I might understand from this that it need be celebrated only for the minimum of a plurality of generations, viz., two; therefore Scripture goes on to state "an ordinance for ever shall ye celebrate it as feast" (Mekhilta).

Verse 15

שבעת ימים denotes a septaine (old French) of days.
שבעת ימים מצות תאכלו SEVEN DAYS SHALL YE EAT UNLEAVENED BREAD — But in another passage it slates: (Deuteronomy 16:8) "Six days shalt thou eat unleavened bread"! This teaches regarding the seventh day of the Passover that it is not obligatory to eat unleavened bread on it, but only this is required viz., that one should not eat leavened food. Whence may we derive that the other six days, too, are optinal as regards the eating of unleavened bread? From what Scripture states: "Six days [shalt thou eat unnleavened bread]". For the following is a Rule by which the Torah may be expounded: Anything that is included in a general statement and goes out (i. e. Scripture singles it out) from this general statement for the purpose of teaching something, does not go out from it in order to teach something regarding itself alone but it goes out from it to teach something about everything that is included in the general statement. Now the seventh day is included in the general statement "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread", and in the text "Six days shall thou eat unleavened bread" it has left the general statement. How is it with the seventh day? It is optional as regards the eating of unleavened bread, (as explained in the earlier portion of this comment)! This, according to the above rule, applies also to everything that was included in the general statement i. e. to the whole seven days, and therefore the other six days are also optional in this respect! One might think that the first night of the Passover is also optional (since it is part of the first day when as we have just shown the eating of unleavened bread is optional), therefore Scripture states, (v. 18) "at evening ye shall eat unleavened bread" Scripture thus fixes it as obligatory for that night (Pesachim 120a).
אך ביום הראשון תשביתו שאור EVEN THE FIRST DAY YE SHALL HAVE PUT AWAY LEAVEN — This means on the eve of the festival ye shall put it away — and that day is termed "the first (הראשון) day" because it is immediately before the seven days: We find in another passage, too, that a thing which precedes another is termed ראשון, as in (Job. 15:7) "Wast thou born ראשון Adam", i. e. wast thou born before Adam? — But perhaps the text it referring only to the first of the seven days (i. e. the word ראשון has its ordinary meaning of first, and leavened food must be removed on the first day of the Festival and not on the preceding day)! Scripture, however, states: (Exodus 34:25) "Thou shalt not offer together with leaven [the blood of my sacrifice]" — i. e. thou shalt not slaughter the Passover sacrifice whilst leavened bread is still existent (but the Passover sacrifice was slaughtered on the afternoon of the day before the first day of the Festival; consequently all leavened food must have been removed by the hour of slaughter)(Mekhilta; cf. Pesachim 5a).
הנפש ההיא [FOR WHOSOEVER EATETH ANYTHING LEAVENED..] THAT SOUL [SHALL BE CUT OFF] — if it eats unleavened bread when it is in its will (נפש) and with its full consciousness — this would exclude one who does so being under some external compulsion (force majeure) (cf. Mekhilta).
מישראל [THAT SOUL SHALL BE CUT OFF] FROM ISRAEL — I might understand from this that he shall be cut off from Israel and that he will be able to betake himself to another nation! Scripture therefore states in another passage, (Leviticus 22:3) "[that soul shall be cut off] from my presence" — in every place that is My territory (i. e. everywhere) (Mekhilta).

Verse 16

מקרא קדש — The word מקרא is an infinitive and the translation is, "And on the first day there shall be "a calling it holy", which implies: call it holy in regard to eating and drinking and raiment (Mekhilta).
לא יעשה בהם NO WORK SHALL BE DONE ON THEM, even by the agency of others (cf. Mekhilta).
הוא לבדו THAT ALONE — that and not such acts preliminary to it (to the preparation of food) as it was possible to do on the eve of the Festival (Beitzah 28b).
לכל נפש BY EVERY BEING — even by cattle. One might think that also food may be prepared for non-Israelites! Scripture however states, (in this verse) לכם (i. e. לכל נפש לכם) for every being that belongs to you (the responsibility for feeding which belongs to you) (Mekhilta).

Verse 17

ושמרתם את המצות AND YE SHALL WATCH THE UNLEAVENED BREAD that it shall not reach the stage of becoming leavened; hence the Rabbis said, if it (the dough) is rising (a sign that the leavening process is setting in) she (the woman kneading the dough) polishes it with cold water (i. e. she slaps the dough with hands dipped in cold water). Rabbi Josiah said: Do not read "את המצות", the unleavened bread, but את המִצְוֹת "[ye shall watch] the commandements" — just as we may not cause the unleavened bread to become leavened by letting the dough remain in its raw state too long so we may not let the commandment become "leavened" by waiting too long before we perform it; but if it (a commandment) comes to your hand, perform it immediately (Mekhilta).
ושמרתם את היום הזה AND YE SHALL GUARD THIS DAY — against work,
לדרתיכם חקת עולם THROUGHOUT YOUR GENERATIONS, AN ORDINANCE FOR EVER — Because the expressions, "[throughout your] generations", and "an ordinance for ever" have not been mentioned in connection with the prohibition of work but only in reference to the celebration of the Festival (v. 14), it is therefore repeated here in order that you should not say: the prohibition, (v. 16) "no work shall be done", was not spoken for future generations but for that generation alone to whom the words were addressed.

Verse 18

עד יום האחד ועשרים UNTIL THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY — Why is this stated? Has it not already been stated, (v. 15) "Seven days [shall ye eat unleavened bread]" (beginning on the fifteenth day, as Rashi shows in his comment on v. 14 and therefore terminating on the twenty-first)? The answer is: Since it is said in that verse, "[seven] days [shalt thou eat unleavened bread]", we may ask whence do we derive that the prohibition of eating leavened bread extends also to the nights of these seven days? Scripture therefore states here, "[Ye shall eat unleavened bread] until the twenty-first-day in the evening" (Mekhilta).

Verse 19

לא ימצא בבתיכם NO LEAVEN SHALL BE FOUND IN YOUR HOUSES — Whence may we derive that this applies also to the external properties which belong to you? From what Scripture states, (Exodus 13:7) "[Neither shall leaven be seen with thee] in all thy boundaries". If this be so, why then need Scripture specify here "in your houses" (since this term is comprised in the more general term "in all thy boundaries")? It is for the purpose of defining the latter term through the former. How is it the case of thy house? Everything contained in it is under thy control! So, too, the term "[leaven in all] your boundaries" means only such leaven as is in your

boundaries and under your control, thereby excluding such leaven belonging to a non-Israelite as is deposited with an Israelite but for which he has accepted no responsibility (Mekhilta).
כי כל אכל מחמצת FOR WHOSOEVER EATETH THAT WHICH LEAVENETH — The purpose of this statement is to mention the punishment of excision for eating שאור (a synonym for מחמצת, which is something that causes the leavening process to set in, such as yeast etc., whilst חמץ denotes food which has become leavened). But has not Scripture already mentioned this punishment for eating leavened food (v. 15)? But the mention of this punishment is repeated here in connection with leaven מחמצת, in order that you should not argue as follows: For eating leavened food — a thing which is fitted to be eaten — it mentions this punishment, but if one eats leaven itself — which is something not fitted to be eaten — one should not be punished for it. If, however, it had mentioned the punishment for eating leaven but had not mentioned the punishment for eating leavened food, I might have said: For eating leaven — a thing which has the property of making other things leavened — it mentions the punishment, but if one eats leavened food — which is something that does not possess the property of making other things leavened — one should not be punished for it; therefore they are both mentioned (Mekhilta; cf. Beitzah 7b).
בגר ובאזרח הארץ WHETHER HE BE A STRANGER OR A NATIVE OF THE LAND — Because the miracle of the Exodus was performed for Israel it is necessary expressly to include the stranger who has become an Israelite in this command (Mekhilta).

Verse 20

מחמצת לא תאכלו THAT WHICH LEAVENETH YE SHALL NOT EAT — Here we have the prohibition regarding eating שאור (that which causes food to become leavened).
כל מחמצת [YE SHALL NOT EAT] ANYTHING THAT LEAVENETH — The use of the word כל, anything (even in the smallest degree), is intended to include food with which it (שאור) is mixed (Mekhilta).
בכל מושבתיכם תאכלו מצות IN ALL YOUR HABITATIONS SHALL YE EAT UNLEAVENED BREAD — This statement is intended to teach that it (the unleavened bread which you must eat on the first night of Passover) must be fitted to be eaten in all your habitations, thus excluding leavened bread which forms "the second tithe" and the unleavened meal cakes brought with the thanksgiving offering (which might be eaten only within the walls of Jerusalem) (Mekhilta).

Verse 21

משכו DRAW OUT — He who has sheep let him draw one out from his own,
וקחו OR TAKE, and he who has no sheep let him purchase one in the market (Mekhilta).
למשפחתיכם [A LAMB] ACCORDING TO YOUR FAMILIES — this corresponds to שה לבית אבות a lamb for the house of their fathers in verse 3.

Verse 22

אזוב HYSSOP — a kind of herb which has thin stalks.
אגדת אזוב A BUNCH OF HYSSOP — three stalks are called a bunch (cf. Shabbat 109b; Sukkah 13a).
אשר בסף means WHICH IS IN THE VESSEL, as in (2 Kings 12:14) "basins (ספות) of silver."
מן הדם אשר בסף WITH THE BLOOD WHICH IS IN THE BASIN — Why does Scripture repeat this (אשר בסף) again? In order that you should not say that one dipping of the hyssop in the basin suffices for the three sprinklings, therefore it is again stated: "[you shall touch the lintel…] "with the

blood that is in the basin", to show that each separate sprinkling must be with the blood which is in the basin — for each touching of the lintel and doorposts there must be a separate dipping (Mekhilta).
ואתם לא תצאו וגו׳ AND NONE OF YOU SHALL GO OUT etc. — This tells us that when once permission is given to the destroying angel to wound he makes no distinction between righteous and wicked (Mekhilta) — and nighttime is the domain of the destroying agencies as it is said, (Psalms 104:20) "[Thou makest darkness and it is night], wherein all the beasts of the forest creep forth".

Verse 23

ופסח signifies AND HE WILL SPARE; and one can also explain it to mean, "and He will leap over them" (cf. Rashi on v. 13 and on Isaiah 30:5).
ולא יתן המשחית AND HE WILL NOT GIVE THE DESTROYER He will not give him power to come in. The phrase is similar to (Genesis 31:9) "And God did not suffer him (נתנו — give him the power) to do me evil".

Verse 24

Verse 25

והיה כי תבאו אל הארץ AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS WHEN YE BE COME TO THE LAND — Scripture makes the observance of this service dependent upon their entrance into the land of Palestine (Mekhilta), and they were not under any obligation, when in the wilderness, to keep more than the one Passover which they kept in the second year after the Exodus (cf. Numbers 9:1—5), and that, too, only in consequence of a special divine communication. (Cf. Rashi on Numbers 9:1 and כאשר דבר (תוס׳ קידׁ ל"ז ע"ב ד"ה הואיל
ACCORDING AS HE SPAKE — And where did He say that He would give them that land? In the following verse: (Exodus 6:8) "And I will bring you into the land" (Mekhilta).

Verse 26

Verse 27

ויקד העם AND THE PEOPLE BOWED THE HEAD in thanksgiving for the tidings of the approaching deliverance and for the promise of their coming into the land, and for the tidings regarding the children whom they would have (since v. 26 implies that they would be blessed with children).

Verse 28

וילכו ויעשו בני ישראל AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WENT AND DID — But did they really do this at once — was not all this spoken to them at the beginning of the month (cf. Rashi on v. 3) and they carried out the command only on the tenth and the fourteenth? But the explanation is: so soon as they had taken these duties upon themselves Scripture accounts it unto them as though they had already performed them (Mekhilta).
וילכו ויעשו THEY WENT AND DID — Scripture enumerates their going also, to give them a reward for going and a reward for doing (Mekhilta).
כאשר צוה ה' את משה ואהרן [THEY DID] AS THE LORD HAD COMMANDED MOSES AND AARON — This is stated for the purpose of declaring Israel's praise — that they did not omit a single matter of all the commandments of Moses

and Aaron. And what is the meaning of כן עשו SO DID THEY? Moses and Aaron also did thus!(Mekhilta).

Verse 29

וה׳ "AND" THE LORD — Wherever it is stated וה׳ "And the Lord" it signifies He and His celestial Court, because the prefix ו expresses an addition, just as one says, "Mr. So-and-so and Mr. So-and-so" (Genesis Rabbah 51:2; cf. Rashi on Genesis 19:24).
הכה כל בכור SMOTE ALL THE FIRSTBORN — all: such, also, belonging to another people who happened to be in Egypt (Mekhilta; cf. Rashi on v. 12).
מבכר פרעה means FROM THE FIRSTBORN PHARAOH'S — Pharaoh too, was a firstborn, but he alone was allowed to remain of the firstborn; and regarding this it states, (Exodus 9:16) "[But for this cause I have maintained thee in life in order to show thee my power" — i. e. to show thee my power at the Read Sea (cf. Mekhilta).
עד בכור השבי UNTO THE FIRSTBORN OF THE CAPTIVE — because they rejoiced at the misfortune of the Israelites (Midrash Tanchuma, Bo 7); and a further reason why they were slain is that they should not say, — if they remained alive — it was our god who brought punishment upon our oppressors, the Egyptians (Mekhilta) The firstborn of the handmaid, threatened with death in 40:5 but not mentioned here as having been slain, is included in those stated here to have been slain since it enumerates here (i. e. the terms used here are intended to include everyone) from the most important amongst all of them to the least important, and the firstborn of the handmaid as belonging to the Egyptian people, is certainly more important than the firstborn of the captive (cf. Rashi on 11:6).

Verse 30

ויקם פרעה AND PHARAOH AROSE from his bed,
לילה AT NIGHT and not, as is the way of kings, at three hours in the day (9 o'clock in the morning) (Mekhilta; cf. Berakhot 9b).
הוא HE, first — and afterwards עבדיו HIS SERVANTS — this informs us that he went round to the houses of his servants and made them get up (Mekhilta).
כי אין בית אשר אין שם מת FOR THERE WAS NOT A HOUSE WHERE THERE WAS NOT ONE DEAD — If there was a firstborn there, he died: if there was no firstborn there, then the chief person in the house died because the chief person in the house is called בכור, as it is said, (Psalms 89:28) "I also will appoint him to be a בכור, [the highest of the kings of the earth]" (Mekhilta DeRashbi 12:30; cf. Rashi on 4:22; Pesachim Rabbah, Midr. Vajosha). Another explanation is: the Egyptian women were unfaithful to their husbands and bore children from young men, unmarried, and thus they (the Egyptian men) had many firstborn sons sometimes there were five to one woman, each being the firstborn to his own father (thus there might well be no house in which there was not a firstborn) (cf. Mekhilta).

Verse 31

ויקרא למשה ולאהרן לילה AND HE CALLED FOR MOSES AND AARON BY NIGHT — This tells us that he went round to the entrances leading into the city (i. e. to each different district) crying out, "Where does Moses reside? Where does Aaron reside?" (Mekhilta).
גם אתם BOTH YE — the men,
גם בני ישראל AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL — the little ones (i. e. בני must be understood literally).

ולכו עבדו את ה' כדברכם AND GO, SERVE THE LORD, AS YE HAVE SAID — everything shall be as you have said and not as I have said: annulled is what I have said, (5:2) "I will not let you go" ("Arise, go out"); annulled is, (10:8) "who are they that shall go?" ("go, both you and the children of Israel"); annulled is, (10:24) "but your flocks and herds must remain" ("Take also your flocks and herds") (cf. Mekhilta).

Verse 32

גם צאנכם גם בקרכם קחו TAKE ALSO YOUR FLOCKS AND HERDS — And what is the force of כאשר דברתם AS YE HAVE SPOKEN? It is an allusion to (10:25) "Thou, also, must give into our hands sacrifices and burnt offerings" — it means: take of my cattle also even as ye said.
וברכתם גם אתי AND BLESS ME ALSO — Pray on my behalf that I should not die because I am a firstborn (cf. Targum Jonathan on Exodus 12:32 and Mekhilta).

Verse 33

כלנו מתים WE ARE ALL DEAD MEN — They said, Not according to Moses' decree is this what has happened for he said (10:5) "And every firstborn shall die", and here all the ordinary people are dead, five or ten in one house (Mekhilta).

Verse 34

טרם יחמץ BEFORE IT WAS LEAVENED — The Egyptians would not allow them to stay long enough for the dough to become leavened.
משארתם (from the root שאר "to be left over") denotes the leavings (what was left) of the unleavened bread and bitter herbs (Mekhilta).
על שכמם UPON THEIR SHOULDER — Although they took many cattle with them yet they bore this upon their shoulders because the commands of God were so dear unto them (Mekhilta).

Verse 35

כדבר משה [THEY DID] ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF MOSES which he had spoken to them in Egypt, viz., (Exodus 11:2) "And let every man ask his fellow…"
ושמלות AND GARMENTS — These were even more valued by them than the silver and than the gold: the later a thing is mentioned in the text the more valued it is (cf. Mekhilta) (i. e. the fact that silver is mentioned before gold shows that the text is mentioning the objects in the ascending scale of value and consequently the garments, as being mentioned last, must have been most valued by them).

Verse 36

וישאלום lit., AND THEY HANDED THEM OVER — Even what they did not ask of them did they give to them: "You say "one" — take "two", but only go!" (Mekhilta).
וינצלו The Targum translates this by ורוקינו, AND THEY EMPTIED OUT.

Verse 37

מרעמסס סכתה FROM RAMESES TO SUCCOTH — These were distant from one another 120 miles and yet they reached there in one moment, as it is said, (Exodus 19:4) "and I carried you as on eagles' wings" (cf. Mekhilta and Rashi on Exodus 19:4).
הגברים ADULT MALES — from twenty years old and upwards (Shir HaShirim Rabbah 3:6).

Verse 38

ערב רב A MIXED MULTITUDE — a mingling of various nations who had become proselytes.

Verse 39

עגת מצות means a cake of (made of) unleavened dough (Mekhilta); dough which has not become leavened is termed וגם צדה לא עשו להם מצה. NEITHER HAD THEY MADE FOR THEMSELVES ANY PROVISION for the journey. This is stated to tell how praiseworthy Israel was: that they did not say, "How can we go forth into the wilderness without provisions?" But they had faith and set forth. This it is that is referred to more explicitly in the prophets: (Jeremiah 2:1) "I remember for thee the affection of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, how thou wentest after me in the wilderness in a land that was not sown". What reward is afterwards set forth there? "Israel is the Lord's hallowed portion etc." (Mekhilta).

Verse 40

אשר ישבו במצרים WHO ABODE IN EGYPT after the other settlements (i. e. including those also) which they had made as strangers in a land that was not theirs (cf. Mekhilta).
שלשים שנה וארבע מאות שנה FOUR HUNDRED AND THIRTY YEARS — Altogether from the birth of Isaac until now were 400 years, and we must reckon from that event, for only from the time when Abraham had offspring from Sarah could the prophecy (Genesis 15:13) "Thy offspring shall be a stranger" be fulfilled; and there had been 30 years since that decree made at "the convenant between the parts" until the birth of Isaac. It is impossible to say that this means that they were 430 years in the land of Egypt alone, for Kohath was one of those who came into Egypt with Jacob (Genesis 46:11); go and reckon all his years and all the years of Amram his son and the whole eighty years of Moses, the latter's son, until the Exodus and you will not find that they total to so many; and you must admit that Kohath had already lived many years before he went down to Egypt, and that many of Amram's years are included in the years of his father Kohath, and that many of the 80 years of Moses are included in the years of his father Amram, so that you see that you will not find 400 years from the time of Israel's coming into Egypt until the Exodus. You are compelled to admit, even though unwillingly, that the other settlements which the patriarchs made in lands other than Egypt come also under the name of "sojourning as a stranger" (גרות), including also that at Hebron, even though it was in Canaan itself, because it is said, (Genesis 35:27) "[Hebron] where Abraham and Isaac sojourned", and it says, (Exodus 6:4) "[the land Canaan], the land of their sojournings wherein they sojourned". Consequently you must necessarily say that the prophecy, "thy offspring shall be strangers… [four hundred years]" began only from the time when he had offspring. And only if you reckon the 400 years from the birth of Isaac will you find that from the time they came into Egypt until the time they left it, was 210 years (as alluded to in Genesis 15:13). This was one of the passages which they altered for king Ptolemy (Mekhilta; Megillah 9a).

Verse 41

ויהי מקץ שלשים שנה וגו' ויהי בעצם היום הזה AND IT CAME TO PASS AT THE END OF THE 430 YEARS … EVEN ON THE SELF-SAME DAY — The addition of the latter phrase tells us that as soon as the predetermined end of the bondage

arrived the Omnipresent did not detain them even as long as the twinkling of an eye (Mekhilta). For on the fifteenth of Nisan the ministering angels had come to Abraham to announce to him the promised birth of Isaac, and on the fifteenth of Nisan Isaac was born, and on the fifteenth of Nisan the decree "between the parts" relating to Israel's slavery was made.

Verse 42

ליל שמרים IT WAS NIGHT OF WATCHING [UNTO THE LORD] — a night which the Holy One, blessed be He, was watching for and looking forward to, that He might fulfill His promise להוציאם מארץ מצרים TO BRING THEM OUT FROM THE LAND OF EGYPT.
הוא הלילה הזה לה IT IS THIS NIGHT OF THE LORD — it is the night of which He said to Abraham, "On this night will I redeem your children" (Mekhilta; cf. Rashi on Genesis 39:11).
שמרים לכל בני ישראל לדרתם [IT IS A NIGHT] OF PROTECTION FOR ALL THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL THROUGHOUT THEIR GENERATIONS — this night is protected, and comes as such from ages past, against all destructive forces, as it is said, (v. 33) "And He will not permit the destroyer [to enter your houses]" (Pesachim 109b; Rosh Hashanah 11b).

Verse 43

זאת חקת הפסח THIS IS THE ORDINANCE OF THE PASSOVER — This chapter was spoken to them on the 14th day of Nisan.
כל בן נכר NO STRANGE PERSON — one whose actions are estranged from his Heavenly Father (Zevachim 22b); both a heathen and an apostate Israelite therefore are implied in this term (Mekhilta).

Verse 44

ומלתה אתו אז יאכל בו WHEN THOU HAST CIRCUMCISED HIM THEN SHALL HE EAT THEREOF — "he" means his (the slave's) master; this tells us that the neglect to circumcise his slaves bars him from eating of the Paschal offering. This is the opinion of R. Joshua. Rabbi Eliezer, however, said: the neglect to circumcise his slaves does not bar him from eating of the Paschal offering. The objection was raised: if this be so what means "Then shall he eat thereof"? — The reply was given: "He" means the slave, not the master (the meaning being that the slave, so long as he is uncircumcised may not eat of it) (cf. Mekhilta).

Verse 45

תושב A TOLERATED SOJOURNER — this means a stranger who has settled in Palestine (having undertaken to observe the seven precepts of the "Sons of Noah").
ושכיר AND A HIRED SERVANT — a heathen. But why need Scripture state at all that these (the תושב and the שכיר) may not eat of the Passover lamb? These are uncircumcised and it is said (v. 48) "And no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof"? But it refers to such a one as a circumcised Arabian or a circumcised Gibeonite who is a settler or a hired servant (Mekhilta; Yevamot 71a).

Verse 46

בבית אחד יאכל IN ONE HOUSE SHALL IT BE EATEN — in one company (cf. שה לבית); meaning that those who have registered themselves for it (the Paschal offering) shall not form themselves afterwards into two companies and divide it. An objection was raised: You say that this means "in one

company", but perhaps this is not so, but it means "in one house" (or place) as it usually signifies, and it intends to teach that if they had begun to eat, for example, in the courtyard of a house and rain fell they may not enter the house to complete the eating of the offering? The reply was given: this cannot be so, because Scripture says, (v. 7) "[They shall put the blood] upon the houses (plural) wherein they shall eat it" — and from here it follows that one who is eating the Paschal offering may eat it in two places (consequently the only meaning of the term בית is "company", as was suggested) (cf. Mekhilta and Onkelos).
לא תוציא מן הבית THOU SHALT NOT CARRY FORTH OUT OF THE HOUSE this must therefore mean away from the company (Mekhilta).
ועצם לא תשברו בו NEITHER SHALL YE BREAK A BONE THEREOF — any bone that is fitted for eating (for the purpose of the performing the command of eating the Paschal lamb) as, for instance, one upon which there is flesh of the size of an olive — to it there is (applies) the prohibition relating to the breaking of a bone, but if there is not upon it flesh of the size of an olive there does not apply to it the prohibition of breaking a bone (cf. Pesachim 84b).

Verse 47

כל עדת ישראל יעשו אתו ALL THE CONGREGATION OF ISRAEL SHALL KEEP IT — Why is this stated? Since it says of the Paschal offering offered in Egypt, (v. 3) "a lamb for the house of their fathers" which means that they are to be registered for it by families, one might think that in the case of the Paschal offering offered by future generations this must also be so! Therefore Scripture states: "All the congregation of Israel may eat it" (i.e. any of them may eat it whoever they may be who combine to do so) (Mekhilta).

Verse 48

ועשה פסח AND HE WILL KEEP THE PASSOVER (the words may mean, then he shall keep the Passover) — One might think that this verse implies that any-one who becomes a proselyte (גר) must keep the Passover-offering rite immediately after his circumcision (even though this has not taken place just before Passover), therefore Scripture states והיה כאזרח הארץ "but he shall be as a native of the land". How is it in the case of a native? He brings the offering on the fourteenth! So, too, a proselyte must bring it only on the fourteenth (Mekhilta).
וכל ערל לא יאכל בו AND NO UNCIRCUMCISED PERSON SHALL EAT THEREOF — This is stated in addition to the somewhat similar text in v. 43 in order to include in the prohibition of eating the Paschal offering any person whose brothers have died in consequence of circumcision (in which case the parents are exempted from circumcising any of their children born after the death of these), because such a one is not to be regarded as an apostate who of set purpose remains uncircumcised, and the law regarding such a one cannot be derived from the statement in v. 43, "no strange person shall eat thereof" (because Rashi has explained this to refer to an Israelite whose doings have estranged him from God).

Verse 49

תורה אחת וגו׳ ONE LAW etc. — This is stated in addition to the similar text in v. 48 in order to declare that the proselyte is equal to the native also in respect to all other commands of the Torah (i. e. the preceding text has reference only to the Paschal offering whilst this is a general statement) (Mekhilta).

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Chapter 13

Verse 1

Verse 2

פטר כל רחם THE FIRST OFFSPRING OF EVERY WOMB — The words mean: that which first openeth the womb, the root פטר meaning to open, as in (Proverbs 17:14) "As one makes an opening (פוטר) for water so is the beginning of strife"; and so, too, is (Psalms 22:8) יפטירו בשפה i. e. "they open the lips".
לי הוא IT IS MINE — I have acquired him for Myself through My having smitten the first born of the Egyptians.

Verse 3

זכור את היום הזה REMEMBER THIS DAY — This teaches that one must make mention of the Exodus from Egypt every day (Mekhilta; cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 27:9).

Verse 4

בחדש האביב IN THE MONTH ABIB — But would we not know in which month they went out (even though it were not stated here)? But Moses spake to them as follows: See the kindness which God has bestowed on you — that He brought you forth in a month that is fitted for going out, not hot, nor cold nor rainy. In the same sense it says (Psalms 68:7) "He bringeth forth the prisoners בכשרות" i. e. in a month that is fitted (כשר) for going out (Mekhilta).

Verse 5

אל ארץ הכנעני וגו׳ TO THE LAND OF THE CANAANITE — And although it enumerates here only the five peoples, all the seven nations are implied (Mekhilta) for all are included in the generic term Canaanite, although there was one of the races of Canaan which had no other name than that of Canaanite (whilst the other races had, beside the generic name Canaanite, some special designation as Hittite etc.: hence under the term Canaanite one may understand either the one race bearing this name or any of the other races. Here, therefore, the introductory word הכנעני alludes to the particular tribe so called and to the two others included in this generic term, or it may allude to three tribes included in the generic term. In either case we get the "seven peoples of Canaan").
נשבע לאבתיך WHICH HE SWORE UNTO THY FATHERS — In the case of Abraham it says, (Genesis 15:18) "On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram [saying, To thy seed I will give this land]"; in the case of Isaac it says, (Genesis 26:3) "Sojourn in this land … [for to thee and to thy seed I will give all these countries]"; and in the case of Jacob it says, (Genesis 28:13) "the land wheron thou liest [to thee will I give it and to thy seed]" (Mekhilta).
זבת חלב ודבש FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY — milk flows from the goats and honey flows from the dates and from the figs.
את העבודה הזאת THIS SERVICE — that of the Paschal offering. But has it not already been said above, (Exodus 12:25) "And it shall come to pass when ye be come into the land … [that ye shall keep this service]"? Why then does it repeat it again? On account of a new matter that is introduced here; viz., in the former chapter it says, (v. 26) "And it shall come to pass when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?" and there Scripture is speaking about a wicked son who excludes himself from the Israelite community (by saying ye, as though he does not wish to participate in the service), whilst here it states, (v. 8) "And thou shalt tell thy son", referring to a son who does not know how to enquire, and Scripture teaches you that you yourself must open up the conversation with Agadic explanations which attract the heart (cf. Mekhilta; Shabbat 87a).

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

בעבור זה FOR THE SAKE OF THIS — for the sake that I should carry out His commands, such as this Passover offering, this unleavened bread and this bitter herb (cf. Mekhilta).
עשה ה׳ לי GOD DID FOR ME — Here is an indication of the reply to be given to the wicked son: that one should say to him, "God did for me" — and one should not say "what God did לנו, for us" — thus implying "not for thee", for if thou hadst been there (in Egypt) thou wouldst not have been regarded as worthy of being redeemed (Mekhilta).

Verse 9

והיה לך לאות AND IT SHALL BE FOR A SIGN UNTO THEE — i. e. the Exodus from Egypt shall be to thee as a sign
על ידך ולזכרון בין עיניך UPON THINE HAND AND AS A MEMORIAL BETWEEN THINE EYES — meaning, that you shall write these paragraphs (verses 1—10 and 11—16) and bind them upon the head and upon the arm.

עַל יָדֶךָ UPON THY HAND — on the left hand; that is why the word is written יָדְךָ in its full form (not יָדֶךָ) in the second section (v. 16), so that we should explain it (by dividing this word into two: יד כה) as meaning the hand that is weak (כהה) (Menachot 36b).

Verse 10

מִימִים יָמִימָה means FROM YEAR TO YEAR (יָמִים frequently signifies a year) (Menachot 36b).

Verse 11

וְהָיָה כִּי יְבִיאֲךָ AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS WHEN [THE LORD] SHALL BRING THEE … [THOU SHALT SET APART etc.] — There are some of our Rabbis who learned from this statement that the firstborn who were born in the wilderness were not thus hallowed. He who says that these were thus hallowed explains this "coming" (i. e. this verse, which appears to make the hallowing of the firstborn dependent upon their arrival in the land) as follows: if you observe it (this command) in the wilderness, you will be privileged to enter the land and to observe it there (cf. Bekhorot 4b).
נִשְׁבַּע לָךְ HE SWORE UNTO THEE — And where did He swear this unto thee? (Exodus 6:8) "And I will bring you unto the land concerning which I did lift up my hand etc." (cf. Rashi on this verse where he explains that "lifting up the hand" denotes taking an oath) (Mekhilta).
וְנָתְנָה לָךְ AND SHALL GIVE IT TO THEE Let it be in thine eyes (regard it) as though He had given it to thee on that same day (when on each occasion you carry out this command) and do not regard it as an inheritance from your ancestors (Mekhilta).

Verse 12

וְהַעֲבַרְתָּ This word וְהַעֲבַרְתָּ is an expression for "setting apart". Similarly it says, (Numbers 27:8) "And ye shall set his inheritance apart (וְהַעֲבַרְתֶּם) for his daughter" (Mekhilta).
שֶׁגֶר בְּהֵמָה DROPPED BY BEAST— a premature birth; and this is termed שֶׁגֶר because its mother casts it out (שִׁגְּרָתּוּ) and expels it (שִׁלְּחָתּוּ) from the womb before its due time (שָׁגַר is a synonym of שָׁלַח "to let go"). Scripture teaches you that although it is a premature birth it is nevertheless holy by reason of its being first born, in so far that it exempts from the law regarding the firstborn the young that comes (is born) after it (Mekhilta). It is true that an animal that is not a premature birth) is also called שֶׁגֶר, as (Deuteronomy 7:13) "the שְׁגַר of thy kine" (where it speaks of blessing this, and it is therefore evident that it cannot there denote a premature birth), but this שֶׁגֶר (i. e. its use here) is intended only to tell us something about a premature birth, because, you see, it has already written in this verse: "Every first offspring of the womb"! And if you say that also the firstborn of an unclean animal (and not a premature birth) is implied by שֶׁגֶר (and that this also must be hallowed) then I reply that Scripture comes and expressly states in another passage, (Deuteronomy 15:19) "[All the firstling males that are born] of thy herd and of thy flocks (thus only clean animals) [shalt thou sanctify etc.]". Another meaning may be given in explanation of וְהַעֲבַרְתָּ כָּל פֶּטֶר רֶחֶם "thou shalt set apart every first born of the womb" — viz., that Scripture by the term פֶּטֶר רֶחֶם is speaking of the firstborn of man (consequently the following words, שֶׁגֶר בְּהֵמָה, need not denote an animal of premature birth, but an animal born in the natural course as it certainly means in Deuteronomy 7:13, and we thus avoid the necessity of here assigning to שֶׁגֶר a meaning different from that which it bears in the latter passage).

Verse 13

פטר חמור AND EVERY FIRST OFFSPRING OF AN ASS — but not the first offspring of other unclean animals. This exception is the enactment of Scripture, because the firstborn of the Egyptians are compared to asses (Ezekiel 23:20; Bereishit Rabbah 96); and a further reason for this exception is because they (the asses) were of assistance to the Israelites when they left Egypt, for there was not a single Israelite who did not take with him from Egypt several asses laden with the silver and gold of Egypt. (Bekhorot 5b).
תפדה בשה THOU SHALT REDEEM WITH A LAMB — one gives a lamb to the priest, and the first offspring of the ass is then permitted to be made use of, whilst the lamb remains in the priest's possession with the character of a non-holy object (חולין — an ordinary animal) (cf. Bekhorot 9b).
וערפתו THEN THOU SHALT BREAK ITS NECK — one breaks its neck with a hatchet from behind and so slays it (Bekhorot 13a). The reason is: he (the owner of the ass) has caused a loss to the possessions of the priest (by not giving him the lamb), therefore must he suffer loss in his own possessions (Mekhilta d['Rabbi Yishmael 13:13:2).
וכל בכור בניך תפדה AND ALL THE FIRSTBORN OF MAN AMONGST THY SONS SHALT THOU REDEEM — His redemption money is fixed in another passage (Numbers 18:16) at five Sela'im.

Verse 14

כי ישאלך בנך מחר WHEN THY SON ASKETH THEE מחר — There is a usage of the word מחר that refers to "now" (i. e. to the period of time that is nearest to "now" viz., to-morrow), and there is another usage of מחר that refers to a day following after the lapse of some time, as, for example, this מחר here and as, for example, (Joshua 22:27) "That your children may not say to our children in time to come (מחר)" which occurs in the chapter about the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben (Mekhilta).
מה זאת WHAT IS THIS? — This is the question of a dull child who has not sufficient understanding to question very profoundly and who therefore asks in an indefinite fashion, "What is this?" In another passage (Deuteronomy 6:20) it states, "[When thy son asketh thee…], What mean the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments … [which the Lord our God hath commanded you?]" This, however, is the question of a wise son. The Torah in mentioning four different explanations of the Passover sacrifice-rite to be given by a father to his children, is speaking in reference to four different types of son: the wicked son (12:25 and in the second half of 13:8), and one who has not sufficient understanding how to ask (in the first half of 13:8), and one who asks in an indefinite manner (13:14), and one who asks in a wise fashion (Deuteronomy 6:20) (cf. Mekhilta; Jerusalem Talmud Pesachim 10:4).

Verse 15

Verse 16

ולטטפת this denotes the Tephillin; and because they consist of four houses (compartments) they are called טטפת, for טט denotes "two" in Katpi and פת in Afriki denotes "two" (Sanhedrin 4b). Menachem ben Seruk, however, placed it in the same section (gave it the same meaning) as, (Ezekiel 21:2) "And speak (הטף) to the south"; and as, (Micah 2:6) "speak ye (תטיפו) not"; so that טטפת would be an expression denoting "speaking", and corresponds to ולזכרון (in v. 9 where it really replaces טוטפת), because whoever sees them (the Tephillin) bound between the eyes will

remember the miracle (so that they become a זכרון, a reminder) and will speak about it (so that they become a טטפת. something that causes one to speak about the miracle).

Verse 17

ויהי בשלח פרעה... ולא נחם AND IT CAME TO PASS WHEN PHARAOH HAD SENT [THE PEOPLE AWAY] THAT GOD GUIDED THEM NOT — The word נחם means He guided them, just as, (Exodus 32:34) "Go, guide (נחה) the people", and (Proverbs 6:22) "when thou goest it shall guide (תנחה) thee".
כי קרוב הוא BECAUSE IT WAS NEAR, and it would therefore be easy to return by the same route to Egypt. — Of Midrashic explanations there are many (cf. Mekhilta).
בראתם מלחמה WHEN THEY SEE WAR — For instance the war mentioned in (Numbers 14:45) "Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites came down etc." If they had proceeded by the direct route they would have then turned back. This is evident, for what would have been the case? If, when He led them about by a circuitous way, they said, (Numbers 14:4) "Let us appoint another chief and go back to Egypt", had He led them by a direct route how much the more certainly would they have spoken so.
פן ינחם PERADVENTURE [THE PEOPLE] REPENT — peradventure they cherish a different thought (they change their mind) about having gone out and set their hearts on returning (cf. Rashi on Genesis 6:6).

Verse 18

וימב means HE LED THE PEOPLE ABOUT from the direct route to a circuitous route.
ים סוף is the same as לים סוף TO THE RED SEA. The word סוף has the meaning of a marshy tract in which reeds grow; examples are: (Exodus 2:3) "She placed him in the reeds (בסוף)"; (Isaiah 19:6) "The flags and the reeds (וסוף) shall wither".
וחמשים — The word חמשים means provided with weapons (Mekhilta). — [Because He led them by a circuitous route through the wilderness He brought it about that they went up from Egypt well-provided; for had He led them circuitously by the route of an inhabited district they would not have provided for themselves every thing that they needed, but only a part, like a person who is travelling from place to place and intends to purchase there whatever he will require. But if he were setting out for the wilderness he must provide all that he will require. — This verse (statement in the verse) is written only with the view of making the ear understand (preparing you for a later statement) viz., that you should not wonder with regard to the war with Amalek and the war with Sihon and Og and Midian where they obtained weapons, since they smote them with the sword]. In a similar sense it says, (Joshua 1:14) "and ye shall pass over armed (חמשים)". Onkelos, too, translated it by מזרזין which signifies "armed" in Aramaic, just as he translates the word וירק in (Genesis 14:14) וירק את חניכיו which means, "And he armed his trained servants" by וזריז. Another explanation of חמשים is: only one out of five (חמשה) went forth from Egypt, and four parts of the people died during the three days of darkness because they were unworthy of being delivered (Mekhilta; cf. Rashi on 10:22).

Verse 19

השבע השביע HE HAD STRAITLY ADJURED — He had made them swear that they would make their children swear. But why did he not make his sons swear that they would take him to the land of Canaan immediately on his death, as Jacob had made his sons swear? Joseph said: I was a ruler in Egypt and I had sufficient power to do what my father desired; but my sons — the

Egyptians will not permit them to do this. Consequently he made them swear that when they would be delivered and would go forth from there that they would take him up with them (Mekhilta).
והעליתם את עצמתי מזה אתכם THEN YE SHALL BRING UP MY BONES AWAY HENCE WITH YOU — It was his brothers whom he made swear thus; consequently this tells us that they (the Israelites who left Egypt) must have brought up with them the bones of all Jacob's sons (lit., the tribes) since it is said "with you" (with your own bones) (Mekhilta).

Verse 20

ויסעו מסכת AND THEY JOURNEYED FROM SUCCOTH — on the second day, for on the first day they had come from Rameses to Succoth (Exodus 12:37).

Verse 21

לנחתם הדרך TO GUIDE THEM IN THE WAY — It (the ל of לנחתם) is punctuated with Patach, because it (the word) is like לְהַנְחוֹתָם (being a contracted form of this); similar is, (Deuteronomy 1:33) "לַרְאוֹתְכֶם the way in which ye shall go", which is the same as לְהַרְאוֹתְכֶם to show you. Thus, too, here: לנחתם means as much as להנחותם to make them be guided i. e. by means of an agent. And who was this agent? The pillar of cloud — and the Holy One, blessed be He, in His glory (Himself) led it before them. Nevertheless He Himself did not act as their immediate guide, but He provided the pillar of cloud that they might be guided by means of it, for, as a matter of fact, as the Scriptural account shows, it was by means of the pillar of cloud that they set forth on their journeys. The pillar of cloud was not for giving light to them but to show them the way.

Verse 22

לא ימיש means He — the Holy One, blessed be He — did not let depart (did not remove) את עמוד הענן יומם ועמוד האש לילה THE PILLAR OF CLOUD BY DAY NOR THE PILLAR OF FIRE BY NIGHT. — This tells us (we may gather from this) that the pillar of cloud handed over the camp to the pillar of fire and the pillar of fire handed it over to the pillar of cloud — that before the one set the other rose (Shabbat 23b).

Chapter 14

Verse 1

Verse 2

וישבו THAT THEY TURN backwards; all the third day they were moving nearer towards the Egyptians, in order to mislead Pharaoh, so that he should say: They have lost their way, as it is said, (v. 3) "so that Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, [They are entangled in the land]".
ויחנו לפני פי החירת AND ENCAMP BEFORE PI-HAHIROTH — This is identical with Pithom (Mekhilta), but now it obtained the name of פי החירת, because there they became בני חורין free-men (חירת is explained as חרות freedom). This was two high, precipitous rocks and the valley between them was called פי הסלעים the mouth (opening) of the rocks.
לפני בעל צפון BEFORE BAAL-ZEPHON — It (the idol of this name) alone had been left by God of all the gods of Egypt and, this, too, in order to mislead them — that they should say that their god was a difficult one to

overcome. It was with reference to this that Job expressly said, (Job 12:23) "He causes the nations to err (מַשְׁגֶּיא, is taken in the sense of מַשְׁגֶּיא from root שגה to err) and then destroyeth them" (Mekhilta; cf. Rashi on this passage).

Verse 3

ואמר פרעה THEN PHARAOH WILL SAY — when he hears that they are turning back.
לבני ישראל means על בני ABOUT THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. Similarly. (v. 14) "The Lord will fight לכם", i. e. עליכם for you; (Genesis 20:13) "Say לי, he is my brother" i. e. say about me.
נבכים הם means, shut up and sunk deep. old French serrer. Of similar meaning are (Job 38:16) "the depths of (נבכי) the sea"; (Psalms 84:7) "in the vale of dejection (הבכא)"; (Job 28:11) "from the depths (מבכי) of the rivers."
נבכים הם means THEY ARE SHUT UP in the wilderness — so that they do not know how to get out of it and whither they should go.

Verse 4

ואכבדה בפרעה AND I WILL BE HONOURED THROUGH PHARAOH — When the Holy One, blessed be He, takes vengeance on the wicked His name is magnified and honoured. Thus, too, it states, (Ezekiel 38:22, 23) "And I will plead against him [with pestilence and with blood etc.]", and afterwards, "Thus I shall be magnified and sanctified etc." And it states, (Psalms 76:3) "There He broke the fiery shafts of the bow", and afterwards (after He has done this) (v. 2) "In Judah is God known. "Further it states, (Psalms 9:17) "The Lord is known because He executeth judgment" (Mekhilta).
בפרעה ובכל חילו THROUGH PHARAOH AND THROUGH ALL HIS FORCES — He began the wrongdoing and with him began the punishment (Mekhilta; cf. Rashi on Exodus 7:28).
ויעשו כן AND THEY DID SO — This is stated in order to tell their praise — that they hearkened to Moses and did not say, How can we move nearer to our enemies; we ought rather to flee," but they said, ''It is ours only to carry out the bidding of the son of Amram" (cf. Mekhilta).

Verse 5

ויגד למלך מצרים AND IT WAS TOLD THE KING OF EGYPT — He sent public officers with them, and as soon as they had reached the three days' journey which he had fixed for them to go and return, and these perceived that they were not going back to Egypt, they came and told Pharaoh on the fourth day (cf. Mekhilta). On the fifth and sixth they pursued after them: on the night of the seventh day they went down into the sea and on the following morning they (the Israelites) sang the Song of Praise and this was the seventh day of Passover. And that is why we read "The Song" (Exodus 15:1 ff.) as the Scriptural lesson on the seventh day of the Festival (Megillah 31a; Seder Olam 5; cf. Sotah 12b).
ויהפך [AND THE HEART…] WAS TURNED — it was turned (changed) from what it had been, because he had said to them (Exodus 12:31) "Arise, go out from the midst of my people", and his servants' hearts were changed because formerly they had said to him, (Exodus 10:7) "How long shall this man be a snare unto us? [let the men go etc.]". Now, however, they (their hearts) were changed, prompting them to pursue them, because of the property that they had handed over to them (cf. Mekhilta).
מעבדנו means from serving us (i. e. the word is an infinitive with an objective suffix and not a noun signifying "from our service", which would require מֵעֲבוֹדָתֵנוּ).

Verse 6

ויאסר את רכבו AND HE MADE READY HIS CHARIOT — he himself (Mekhilta)
ואת עמו לקח עמו AND TOOK HIS PEOPLE WITH HIM — he drew them on by fine words, as follows: "We have been stricken and they have taken our money and yet we have let them go free. Come with me and I will not behave with you as other kings. It is the way of other kings that their subjects go in front of them into the battle, but I will go in front of you" — as, indeed, it is said, (v. 10) "And Pharaoh הקריב" (the Hiphil): which signifies he brought himself near and hastened in front of his army. — "It is the way of other kings to take the booty at the beginning as he chooses (to have first pick of the booty), but I will be equal to you in the division of the booty" — as, indeed, it states that he said, (Exodus 15:9) "I will divide the spoil"Mekhilta.

Verse 7

בחור means CHOSEN. The word בחור is singular number — the idea is: each and every chariot in that number was a selected one.
וכל רכב מצרים signifies AND with these were ALL THE other CHARIOTS OF EGYPT. And whence came all these animals required for the chariots? If you say that they were from the cattle of the Egyptians — but you know it is stated, (Exodus 9:6) "And all the cattle of the Egyptians died". And if you say that they were from the Israelites' cattle — but is it not stated, (Exodus 10:26) "Our cattle, also, shall go with us"! Then whose were they? They were of those "who feared the word of the Lord" and saved their cattle by bringing them into their stables (Exodus 9:20). Deriving it from here (on account of this fact) R. Simeon said: The best amongst the Egyptians — kill him (otherwise he will afterwards devise evil against you); the best amongst the serpents — crush its brains (Mekhilta).
ושלשים על כלו means army-captains, as the Targum has it.

Verse 8

ויחזק ה' את לב פרעה AND THE LORD ALLOWED THE HEART OF PHARAOH TO BE HARDENED — the meaning is, that he was in doubt whether to pursue or not, and He hardened his heart to pursue (Mekhilta).
ביד רמה WITH A HIGH HAND — with high and open daring (cf. Mekhilta).

Verse 9

Verse 10

ופרעה הקריב — It should have written ופרעה קרב "and Pharaoh came near" — what is the force of the Hiphil הקריב, "He caused to come near"? He made himself come near — he forced himself to go in front of them as he had arranged with them (cf. Rashi on v. 6).
נסע אחריהם [EGYPT] JOURNEYED AFTER THEM (נסע is singular) — the Egyptians journeyed after them with one mind and as one man (hence the use of the singular) (Mekhilta). Another explanation of והנה מצרים נסע אחריהם is: the singular denotes that they saw, not the Egyptians, but the guardian angel of Egypt coming from heaven to assist the Egyptians. Thus is it explained in the Tanchuma (cf. Exodus Rabbah 21:5).
ויצעקו AND THEY CRIED — they took to hand the handicraft of their fathers (they had recourse to prayer as their fathers had always done in times of trouble). In the case of Abraham it is said, (Genesis 19:27) "[And Abraham went] to the place where he had stood in prayer". In the case of

Isaac: (Genesis 24:63) "[He went out towards evening] to pray". In the case of Jacob: (Genesis 28:11) "He prayed to the Omnipresent God" (cf. Mekhilta; Midrash Tanchuma, Vayera 9, and Rashi on the texts quoted).

Verse 11

המבלי אין קברים signifies, was it on account of lack of graves — because there were no graves in Egypt in which to be buried — that thou didst bring us out from there? old French si pour faillance de non fossés.

Verse 12

אשר דברנו אליך במצרים [THE WORD] THAT WE SPOKE UNTO THEE IN EGYPT — And where had they said this? (Exodus 5:21) "The Lord look upon you and judge!" (Mekhilta)
ממתנו means THAN THAT WE SHOULD DIE. If the word had been punctuated with a Melopum (our חולם i. e. מֵמוֹתֵנוּ) it would have to be explained "than our death" (מוֹתֵנוּ our death from the noun מָוֶת) but now that it is punctuated with a שורק (our Kibbutz) it must be explained by "than that we should die". And similar is, (Exodus 16:3) "Would that מוּתֵנוּ" i. e. "that we should die"; similar is, (II Samuel 19:1) "Would that מוּתִי" in the history of Absalom, which means "that I should die". It is an infinitive like (Zephaniah 3:8) "Until the day קוּמִי for ever", and as (II Chronicles 18:26) "Until the day שׁוּבִי in peace" — which signify שאקום "that I shall arise", and שאשוב "that I shall return".

Verse 13

כי אשר ראיתם את מצרים וגו׳ means WHAT (the fact that) YE HAVE SEEN them (THE EGYPTIANS), is only היום THIS DAY — to-day it it that ye see them, BUT YE SHALL NEVER AGAIN see them.

Verse 14

ילחם לכם means He will fight on your behalf; similar is (v. 25) "For the Lord fighteth for them (להם)"; so too, (Job. 13:8) "will ye contend for God (לאל)?" and thus, too, (Genesis 24:7) "and who spoke on my behalf (לי)", and so, too, (Judges 6:31) "Will ye plead for Baal (לבעל)?"

Verse 15

מה תצעק אלי WHEREFORE CRIEST THOU UNTO ME? — there is no mention that he prayed to God concerning this, but this teaches us that Moses stood in prayer. Whereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, "It is no time now to pray at length, when Israel is placed in trouble". Another explanation of מה תצעק אלי (taking it in the sense of "Wherefore criest thou? אלי it is to Me — concerns Me") — upon Me rests this matter and not upon thee. The idea contained in this explanation is similar to what is expressed elsewhere: (Isaiah 45:11) "Concerning My sons and concerning the work of My hands will ye command Me?" (Mekhilta)
דבר אל בני ישראל ויסעו SPEAK UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL THAT THEY JOURNEY ONWARDS — There is nothing for them to do but to journey on, for the sea will not stand in their way: their ancestors' merits and their own, and the faith that they placed in Me so that they left Egypt will suffice to divide the sea for them (cf. Mekhilta; Shemot Rabbah 21:8).

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

וילך מאחריהם AND WENT BEHIND THEM to divide the camp of Egypt from the camp of Israel and to receive the arrows and the missiles of the Egyptians. Everywhere it says "The Angel of the Lord (ה׳)" whilst here we have The Angel of God (אלהים)."! The name אלהים really denotes, wherever it occurs, "Judge" (lit., "judgment"). Therefore the use of this term here teaches us that Israel was, at that moment, arraigned in judgment, whether to be saved or to be destroyed together with Egypt (Mekhilta).
ויסע עמוד הענן AND THE PILLAR OF CLOUD WENT [FROM BEFORE THEM] — When it became dark and the pillar of cloud handed over the camp to the pillar of fire, the cloud did not go away as it was accustomed to go away altogether in the evening, but it went and betook itself behind them to make it dark for the Egyptians.

Verse 20

ויבא בין מחנה מצרים AND IT CAME BETWEEN THE CAMP OF EGYPT — A parable: it may be compared to one who is proceeding on a journey, his son walking in front of him. If, now, brigands come to capture him (the son), he takes him away from in front of him and places him behind himself. If a wolf then comes behind him he places him again in front. If brigands come in front of him and wolves behind him, he places him on his arm and fights against them. Thus did God do for Israel, as it says, (Hosea 11:3) "I led Ephraim — He took them upon His arms" (Mekhilta).
ויהי הענן והחשך AND THERE WAS CLOUD AND DARKNESS to the Egyptians.
ויאר AND IT — the pillar of fire — ILLUMINATED the night for the Israelites, and went before them as was its way to go every night, whilst the darkness of the cloud was turned towards the Egyptians.
ולא קרב זה אל זה SO THAT ONE APPROACHED NOT ANOTHER — [This does not mean that one person did not approach another but]: this camp did not approach that camp (Mekhilta).

Verse 21

ברוח קדים עזה BY A POWERFUL EAST WIND — i. e. by the east wind which is the most powerful of the winds. This is the wind by which the Holy One, blessed be He, exacts punishment from the wicked, as it is said, (Jeremiah 18:17) "I will scatter them as with an east wind"; (Hosea 13:15) "An east wind shall come, the wind of the Lord"; (Ezekiel 27:26) "The east wind hath broken thee in the heart of the sea"; (Isaiah 27:8) "He hath removed her with His rough blast in the day of the east wind" (cf. Mekhilta).
ויבקעו המים AND THE WATERS WERE DIVIDED — all the waters in the world (Mekhilta).

Verse 22

Verse 23

כל סוס פרעה (The word סוס is singular) — But was there only one horse? But the use of the singular teaches us that they were all accounted before the Omnipresent as only one horse (cf. Mekhilta).

Verse 24

באשמרת הבקר IN THE MORNING WATCH — The three divisions of the night are each called an אשמורה "a watch" (Berakhot 3b), and that which immediately precedes the morning is called "the morning watch". I am of opinion that because the night is divided for the watches (משמרות) of the song of the ministering angels — company after company — into three divisions, therefore each division of the night is termed, for all purposes, an אשמרת (another form of משמר the angel's watch), and this is what Onkelos has in mind when he translates אשמרת by מטרת.
וישקף means HE LOOKED, as much as to say, He turned towards them to destroy them (cf. Rashi on Genesis 18:16), and its rendering in the Targum, ואסתכי, is also an expression denoting looking, just as he translates (Numbers 23:14), "the field of the watchers (צפים)" by "the field of,סכותא" which denotes "looking".
בעמוד אש וענן THROUGH THE PILLAR OF FIRE AND CLOUD — viz., the pillar of cloud descended and made it (the bed of the sea) like clay, and the pillar of fire made it boiling hot so that the horses' hoofs fell off (Mekhilta).
ויהם has the meaning of confusion. old French estordison. He cast them into confusion; He took away their ensigns. And we read in the Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer, the son of Rabbi José, the Galilean: Wherever it speaks of מהומה (forms from the root המם) it signifies a thundering sound; and the following passage is the father of all of them (i. e. that from which this meaning is quite evident): (I Samuel 7:10) "And the Lord thundered with a great sound … upon the Philistines and discomfited them (ויהמם)".

Verse 25

ויסר את אפן מרכבותיו AND HE REMOVED THEIR CHARIOT WHEELS — Through the power of the fire of the pillar of fire the wheels were burnt and the chariots were thus dragged along and those who were sitting in them were thrown about and their limbs were all put out of joint (cf. Mekhilta).
וינהגהו בכבדות signifies: And He treated them with a treatment that was hard and harsh to them. In the measure that they (the Egyptians) had meted out to the Israelites was it meted out to them, for (9:34) "He hardened his heart, he and his servants", and therefore here: "He treated them (the Egyptians) in a hard manner" (cf. Mekhilta).
נלחם להם במצרים FIGHTETH FOR THEM במצריים — means against the Egyptians. Another explanation of במצרים is: in the land of Egypt, for just as these were smitten at the Sea so, too, were smitten those who remained in Egypt (cf. Mekhilta).

Verse 26

וישבו המים means THE WATERS that were standing erect as a wall SHALL RETURN to their places and form a cover over the Egyptians.

Verse 27

לפנות בקר AT THE TURNING OF THE MORNING at the time when the morning turns to come).
לאיתנו means TO ITS ORIGINAL STRENGTH (Mekhilta).
נסים לקראתו FLED TOWARDS IT — because they were thrown into confusion and were bewildered and on that account ran towards it.

וינער ה AND THE LORD OVERTHREW (or, shook out or emptied out) — as a person empties out a pot, turning what is on top underneath and what is underneath on top: thus they were emptied out of their chariots and they rose and fell till at last they were broken to pieces in the sea, and the Holy One, blessed be He, put vitality (strength) in them so that they could bear the pain (and thus their agony was protracted) (cf. Mekhilta). וינער — Onkelos renders this by ושנ׳ק which is an expression for confounding in Aramaic, and there are many examples of it in the Agadic expositions.

Verse 28

ויכסו את הרכב... לכל חיל פרעה AND COVERED THE CHARIOTS … AND ALL THE FORCES OF PHARAOH — in regard to the ל of לכל, this is the way of Scripture verses (of Biblical Hebrew) to write a redundant ל, as in (Exodus 27:3) "all (לכל) its vessels shalt thou make of copper".. So, too, (Exodus 27:19) ''all (לכל) the vessels of the dwelling in all the service thereof"; (Numbers 4:32) "and their pins and their cords and all (לכל) their vessels". It is only an elegancy of style.

Verse 29

Verse 30

וירא ישראל את מצרים מת AND ISRAEL SAW THE EGYPTIANS DEAD — because the sea threw them out on its shore in order that the Israelites should not say: "Just as we have come up from out of the sea on this part, so they have come up on another part of this shore, but far away from us, and they will pursue us" (Mekhilta; Pesachim 118b; Arakhin 15a).

Verse 31

את היד הגדלה denotes THE GREAT power which the HAND of the Holy One, blessed be He, had exercised. There are many meanings that are appropriate to the expression יד, hand, but all of them really signify the actual hand, and he who is explaining it must adapt the language according to the meaning of the passage.

Chapter 15

Verse 1

אז ישיר משה THEN SANG MOSES — with regard to the usage of the future ישיר, the meaning is: THEN — i. e. when he saw the miracle it entered his mind that HE WOULD SING a song. Similar is, (Joshua 10:12) "Then Joshua would speak (אז ידבר)"; and similar, (1 Kings 7:8) "and a house he would make (יעשה) for Pharaoh's daughter", which signifies "he purposed in his heart that he would make it for her". So, also, ישיר here signifies: his heart told him that he should sing, and thus did he actually do, as it states, "and they (Moses and Israel) spake as follows, 'I will sing unto the Lord'". And in the same way, in the case of Joshua, it means: then (או) — when he saw the miracle mentioned in that narrative — his heart told him (prompted him) to speak, and thus did he actually do, as it is stated, "and he spake before the eyes of all Israel". The same applies to the Song of the Well (Numbers 21:17) which begins with the words: אז ישיר ישראל, "then would Israel sing"; it expresses the intention quite

plainly in the following words, "Come up, O Well — sing ye unto it" (i. e. these words are a call to the people to sing to it after Israel had expressed their intention so to do and are not part of the song itself which begins with the words that follow). With regard to (1 Kings 11:7) אז יבנה שלמה במה our Rabbis explained that He proposed to build a high place for Chemosh but actually did not build it (Sanhedrin 91b). This, too, teaches us that the י as a prefix of the imperfect is used in reference to intention to do a thing. This explanation serves to settle the literal meaning of the text. But so far as its Midrashic explanation is concerned our Rabbis, of blessed memory, said: from here (i. e. from the fact that the future tense is used) we may derive an intimation that the tenet of the Resurrection of the Dead is from the Torah (is alluded to, although only by inference, in the Torah) (Sanhedrin 91b). And thus, also, do they explain in the case of all them (all of the examples quoted) except in the case of that referring to Solomon which they explained in the sense that he purposed to build a high place but did not build it. — One cannot say that this can be appropriately explained in the same way as one explains other passages which are written in the future tense, but which really refer to an immediate action (i. e. to a then present time); for example, (Job. 1:5) "Thus was Job doing (יעשה)"; (Numbers 9:18) "At the command of the Lord were they encamping (יחנו)"; (Numbers 9:20) "And there were occasions when the cloud was (יהיה) upon the tabernacle", because these were each of them something that was continuously happening, and there is proper to it either the future tense or the past tense (cf. Rashi on Genesis 29:3). But this (אז ישיר and other passages quoted) which happened only at the particular moment mentioned (once and once only), one cannot fittingly explain in this sense (i. e. of continuous action).

כי גאה גאה FOR HE IS GLORIOUSLY SUBLIME — render this as the Targum does: for He is exalted above all exalted beings and real exaltation (supremity) is His alone. [Another explanation: the repetition of the word is intended to state that He has done something which it is impossible for a human being (lit., flesh and blood) to do. When he (the latter) fights against another and vanquishes him he throws him off the horse, but here — horse and its rider together hath He hurled into the sea. The usage is, that in the case of everything which cannot possibly be done by anyone except Him the appropriate expression to use is a form of the root גאה, as in (Isaiah 12:5), "for He hath done גאות" — gloriously. In the same way you will find that throughout the whole Song the words are repeated: (v. 2) "The strength and vengeance of the Lord have become my help"; (v. 4). "The Lord is a man of war, the Lord is His name" (cf. Rashi's explanation of this), and this is the case in all the verses]. Another explanation of כי גאה גאה: I will sing unto the Lord although (כי) He is exalted high above all songs and however much I may praise Him there will still remain something additional in Him to be praised (עוד יש בו תוספת — I can never exhaust his praises), and not as is the practice in respect to a human king whom one praises, attributing to him certain virtues whilst these are really not in him (cf. Mekhilta).

סוס ורכבו THE HORSE AND ITS RIDER — both of them attached one to the other; and the waters lifted them up and then they descended into the depths and yet they did not become separated (Mekhilta).

רמה means HE HATH CAST. Similar is (Daniel 3:21) "and they were cast (ורמיו) into the midst of the fiery furnace". And an Agadic explanation is: One verse says רמה, which involves the idea of raising (רום), and another verse (v. 4) says, ירה which implies casting from a height (cf. Rashi on 19:13 ירה יירה)! This teaches us that they first went up on high and then went down into the depths (i. e. they were tossed up and down). The meaning of ירה here is the same as in (Job. 38:6) "Who laid (ירה) the corner-stone thereof?" — implying laying from above to below (Mekhilta).

Verse 2

עזי וזמרת יה — Onkelos translated this by "my might and my praise", taking עָזִּי the same as עֻזִּי, and וְזִמְרָת the same as וְזִמְרָתִי. But I wonder at the wording of the text if this translation is correct, for you will find no similar example of its punctuation (i. e. of עָזִּי) in the Scriptures except in three passages where it is, in each case, followed by וזמרת. In all other passages it is punctuated with שורק (i. e. our Kibbutz); e. g., עֻזּוֹ אליך אשמרה (Psalms 59:10) ה' עֻזִּי ומעזי (Jeremiah 16:19) So, too, every word of two letters that is punctuated with a Melopum (our חולם) when it is lengthened by the addition of a third letter (i. e. when it has a pronominal suffix as in the examples given below), and the second has not a Sheva (חטף), the first is punctuated with a שורק (Kibbuts) — as, for instance, עֹז and עֻזִּי; רֹק and רֻקִּי ; חֹק and חֻקִּי ; עֹל and עֻלִּי as in (Isaiah 14:25) "then shall his yoke (עֻלּוֹ, from עֹל) depart from him"; — כֹּל and כֻּלּוֹ, as in (Exodus 14:7) "and captains over each of them (כֻּלּוֹ) — from כֹּל. But these three examples of עָזִּי וְזִמְרָת, viz., that occuring here and that in Isaiah (12:2) and that in Psalms (118:14), are punctuated with short Kametz, whereas the translation of Onkelos would require עֻזִּי and not עָזִּי. Then further, in not one of them (these three passages) is it written וזמרתי, as Onkelos translates, but וזמרת and remarkably enough all of them are immediately followed by ויהי לי לישועה. — Therefore I say in explanation of the wording of the text that עָזִּי is not the same as עֻזִּי and וְזִמְרָת is not the same as וְזִמְרָתִי, but עָזִּי is a noun without a suffix of any kind, as we find in (Psalms 123:1) "The one who sits (הַיּוֹשְׁבִי) in heaven"; (Obadiah 3:3) "The one who dwells (שׁוֹכְנִי) in the cleft of the rock"; (Deuteronomy 33:16) "He that dwelleth (שׁוֹכְנִי) in the bush" (where the syllable at the end of the word is part of the noun and is not the pronominal suffix denoting "my"). The praise, therefore, proclaimed in these words is this: The עז and the זִמְרָת of God, this was to me as a help. The word וזמרת is a noun in the construct state to the word which expressess the Divine Name (יָהּ), in the same sense as (Judges 5:23) "to the help of (לעזרת — const.) the Lord"; (Isaiah 9:18) "through the wrath of (בעברת — constr.) the Lord"; (Ecc. 3:18) "because of (דברת — const.) the sons of man". The expression וזמרת has the meaning of the root which we find in (Leviticus 25:4) "thou shalt not prune (תזמר)" and in (Isaiah 25:5) "the cutting down (זמיר) of the terrible ones", both of which have the meaning "lopping off" and "cutting down". Thus the verse signifies: "The strength and vengeance of our God has become to us a help". Do not be puzzled by the expression ויהי — that it does not state היה — for we have other verses also that use this idiom, and the following is an example of such a construction: (1 Kings 6:5) "round about the wall of the house, both of the temple and the most holy place, he made (ויעש) a side structure", and it should have said (instead of ויעש etc.) עשה לו צלעות סביב. Similarly in Chronicles, (2 10:17) "But as for the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned (וימלך) over them", where it should have said מלך עליהם. Other examples are: (Numbers 14:16) "Because the Lord was unable etc…. He slaughtered them (וישחטם)", where it should have said שחטם; (Numbers 14:36, 37) "And the men whom Moses sent … they died (וימתו)", where it should have said מתו; (Exodus 9:21) "And he that regarded not the word of the Lord left (ויעזב) his cattle, etc.", where it should have said עזב.

זה אלי THIS IS MY GOD — In His glory did He reveal Himself to them and they pointed to Him — as it were — with the finger exclaiming "This is my God!" (Shir HaShirim Rabbah 3:15) A maid servant beheld at the Red Sea what even the prophets never saw (Mekhilta).

ואנוהו Onkelos translates this in the sense of a dwelling (viz., I will build Him a temple) as in (Isaiah 33:20) "a peaceful habitation (נוה)" and in (Isaiah 65:10) "a dwelling (נוה) for flocks". Another explanation of ואנוהו is that it has the sense of נוי, "beauty", and the meaning is:

I will relate His splendour and praiseworthiness to the inhabitants of the world as, for example, was actually done by Israel: (Song 5:9, 10) The nations of the world ask, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" … and Israel replies, "My beloved is white and ruddy", and thus you will find it in that whole section (cf. Mekhilta).
אלהי אבי MY FATHER'S GOD is this וארממנהו AND I WILL EXALT HIM. אלהי אבי He is not merely my God but He was MY FATHER'S GOD also — I am not the beginning of the sanctity (i. e. I am not the first to hallow Him by proclaiming Him God), this hallowing of Him and the proclamation of His Godship over me is something that has been held by me and has remained mine since the days of my fathers.

Verse 3

ה' איש מלחמה means The Lord is a Master of war; just as, (Ruth 1:3) "the איש (i. e. the master) of Naomi". (Cf. Rashi on that verse). Wherever the words איש and אישך occur they must be translated by בעל; so, too, (1 Kings 2:2) "Be thou strong and show thyself an איש" — a mighty person.
ה' שמו THE LORD IS HIS NAME — His wars are not waged with martial weapons but He fights by means of His Name, just as David said, (I Samuel 17:45) "But I come against thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts". Another explanation of ה׳ שמו — He is a man of war, but His Name is the Lord (the God of Mercy): even at the time when He battles against and avenges Himself upon His enemies He retains His attribute (that expressed by His name ה׳) showing pity to His creatures and feeding all the inhabitants of the world; not as is the nature of the kings of the world each one of whom when he is engaged in war turns aside from all other engagements, and has not the power to do both this and that (cf. Mekhilta).

Verse 4

ירה בים Onkelos translates this by שדי בימא: HE HATH CAST IN THE SEA. The word שדי is an expression for "casting". And thus, also, it says, (Exodus 19:13) או ירה יירה which Onkelos renders by או אשתדאה ישתדי "or he shall certainly be thrown down" where the ת is used in both these words in place of (as marking) the Ithpael form, so that in these Targum words the root is שדי.
ומבחר AND THE CHOICEST — This word is a noun of similar form to מְרְכָּב and מִשְׁכָּב and [קדש] מִקְרָא.
טבעו ARE SUNK — The root טבע always denotes sinking in slimy matter, as may be seen from (Psalms 69:3) "I am sunk (טבעתי) in deep mire", and from (Jeremiah 38:6) "And Jeremiah sank (ויטבע) in the mire". The fact that this expression is used teaches, therefore, that the sea became slime (cf. Rashi on 14:24) to requite them according to their own measure — because that they had made the Israelites work as slaves with slime and with bricks (Mekhilta).

Verse 5

יכסימו THEY COVER THEM — this is the same as יְכַסּוּם and the middle י is redundant. This is quite usual in Scripture-verses (in Biblical Hebrew), just as in (Deuteronomy 8:13) וצאנך ירבין, and (Psalms 36:9) ירויון מדשן ביתך, and the force of the first י which expresses the future tense you must explain as follows: they have been sunk in the Red Sea in order that the waters should return and should cover them. The word יכסימו has no similar example in Scripture so far as its punctuation is concerned; ordinarily it would be יְכַסְּיֻמוּ with Melopum (חולם).
כמו אבן AS A STONE — But in another passage (v. 10) it states, "they dropped like lead", and in yet another passage (v. 7) "it consumes them as stubble"! The wicked amongst the Egyptians were as stubble, being

continually dashed about, and tossed up and down; those of average worth sank as a stone, suffering less agony, whilst the best amongst them sank as lead so that they came to their rest at once (cf. Mekhilta).

Verse 6

ימינך ...ימינך THY RIGHT HAND — twice! — When Israel performs the will of the Omnipresent the left hand (intended for punishment) becomes a right hand (bestowing reward, so that God has two right hands as it were) (Mekhilta).
ימינך ה' נאדרי בכח THY RIGHT HAND, O LORD, IS GLORIOUS IN POWER to deliver Israel, and thy second right hand dashes the enemy in pieces. But it seems to me that if we have to take it in the sense: Thy right hand is glorious to save, thy right hand dashes in pieces etc. the explanation is that the self-same right hand itself dashes the enemy in pieces, something which it is impossible for a human being — to do two actions with one hand. But the literal sense of the text is: "Thy right hand, that is glorious in power — what does it do?" — "Thy right hand, O Lord, dashes the enemy in pieces". There are many Scriptural verses exactly in this poetical form, e. g., (Psalms 92:10) "For, behold, thine enemies, O Lord, for behold, thine enemies shall perish" and others similar.
נאדרי The י is redundant as in (Lamentations 1:1) "full of (רבתי) people. .. princess (שרתי) amongst the provinces"; (Genesis 31:39) "stolen (גנבתי) by day".
תרעץ אויב means, it always crushes and shatters the enemy; similar in meaning to it is, "And they crushed (וירעצו) and broke the children of Israel", in the Book of Judges (Judges 10:8). [Another explanation is: Thy right hand that is glorious in power shatters and punishes the enemy, and these words must be connected with the following:

Verse 7

וברב גאונך AND THROUGH THE GREATNESS OF THINE EXCELLENCY: if the hand alone crushes the spirit of the enemy, then when He raises it aloft IN THE GREATNESS OF HIS EXCELLENCY surely then HE WILL OVERTHROW THEM THAT RISE UP AGAINST HIM; and if through the greatness of His excellency alone His enemies are overthrown, how much more sure is it that when HE SENDETH FORTH THE FIERCENESS OF HIS WRATH against them IT WILL CONSUME THEM].
תהרס means, Thou always overthrowest קמיך i. e. those that rise up against thee. And who are those who rise up against Him? They are those who rise up against Israel; and similarly it says, (Psalms 83:3, 4) "For, lo, thine enemies are in an uproar!" And what is this uproar? "against thy people they take crafty counsel", and on this account — because they are Israel's enemies — it calls them the enemies of the Omnipresent (Mekhilta).

Verse 8

וברוח אפיך AND WITH THE BREATH OF THY NOSTRILS — the breath that issues from both nostrils. Scripture speaks — if this were at all possible (i. e. if one may be permitted to speak so of God) of the Shechina (God) in the same manner as it does of a human monarch, in order to make peoples' ears hear the facts in accordance with what usually happens to that they may understand the matter: when a man is angry the breath issues from his nostrils (and Scripture attributes this to God, also, when He is in anger). A similar idea is: (Psalms 18:9) "Smoke rose up in His nostril", and also, (Job. 4:9) "By the breath of his nostril they are consumed". And this is the meaning of what He said, (Isaiah 48:9) "For My name's sake אאריך I will make long My אף": when one's anger subsides his breathing becomes long, whilst when one is in anger his breathing is

short (consequently אאריך אפי signifies "I will not be angry"). The text continues ותהלתי אחטם לך which means "for the sake of My praise I will place a nose-ring in My nose to close up the nostrils against the anger and the breath so that they should not issue forth". The word לך, for thee, in this text, means "for thy sake", אחטם has the same meaning and root as in "a wild camel with a nose-ring (חֹטָם)" which occurs in Mishna Treatise Sabbath (Mishnah Shabbat 5:1). Thus does the explanation appear to me. And wherever אף and חרון (i. e. where אף and words formed from the same root as חרון) occur in the Scriptures I say that it has the following sense: In the phrase חרה אף the first word is the same as (Job 30:30) "My bone is חרה with heat", where חרה denotes burning and glowing, and this metaphor is used because the nostrils become hot and burning in a time of anger. The noun חרון is a derivation of חרה, just as רצון is a derivation of רצה, and therefore signifies "burning". In the same way, חֵמָה which also signifies wrath really denotes heat (from a root יחם, not חמם, since the מ of חֵמָה has no Dagesh. חֵמָה is formed from יחם as עֵדָה, congregation, from יעד). That is why Scripture says, (Esther 1:12) וחמתו בערה בו "his wrath burned in him", and when one's wrath subsides one says, "his mind has become cooled" (נתקררה from קר cold).

נערמו מים THE WATERS WERE HEAPED UP — Onkelos translated this in the sense of ערמימות, subtlety (the waters showed themselves clever); (cf. ערום Genesis 3:1); but it is more in accordance with the elegance of Biblical style to take it as the noun of the same root as in (Song 7:3) "a stack of (ערמת) wheat", and the following words, "the floods placed themselves like a mound", prove that this is so (cf. Mekhilta). נערמו — Through the burning heat of the breath that issued from thy nostrils (וברוח אפיך) the waters were dried up and they became like heaps and piles of gain-stacks (ערמה) which are high.

כמו נד — Render this as the Targum does: like a שור, i. e. a wall. נד is an expression for anything heaped up and gathered together, as, (Isaiah 17:11) "a heap (נד) of boughs in the day of grief"; (Psalms 33:7) "He gathereth as a heap (כַּנֵּד) [the waters of the sea]". It is not written "He gathereth כנאד", but כנאד", and if כנד, were the same as כנאד "like a water-skin", and כונס were an expression for "bringing a thing in", it should have written: "He gathered in (מכנים and not כונס) the waters of the sea as in a water-skin", (כבנאד and not כנד), but כונס denotes gathering together and heaping up. And this must also be the meaning of נד in (Joshua 3:16) "[the waters] rose up as one נד", and (Joshua v. 13) "and they shall stand in one נד"; for the expressions "rising up" and "standing up" cannot be used in reference to water in water-skins but only to water that stands up as walls and heaps (and this must therefore be the meaning of כמו נד in our text also). And, then again, we find the word נאד punctuated only with a Melopum (חולם), as, (Psalms 56:9) "Put thou my tears into thy bottle (נאֹדֶךָ)" and (Judges 4:19) "the bottle of (נאד) milk".

קפאו WERE CONGEALED, like (Job 10:10) "thou hast curdled me (תקפיאני) like cheese"; the meaning is that the depths were hardened and became like stones, and the waters cast the Egyptians against the stony wall with force and battled against them with every harsh means (cf. Mekhilta).

בלב ים means IN THE VERY STRENGTH OF THE SEA. It is the way of Scripture-verses to speak thus (to use לב in a metaphorical sense); e. g., (Deuteronomy 4:11) "unto the very midst of (לב) heaven"; (II Samuel 18:14) "in the midst of (בלב) the terebinth". It is an expression denoting the essence and strength of a thing.

Verse 9

אמר אויב THE ENEMY SAID to his people, when he was persuading them with words (cf. Rashi on 14:6), I WILL PURSUE and I WILL OVERTAKE them and I WILL DIVIDE THE SPOIL with my captains and my subjects.
תמלאמו means SHALL BE FILLED WITH THEM (not it shall fill them). נפשי MY SOUL — my spirit, my desire. Do not be puzzled at a word, that expresses an idea usually expressed by two, viz., תמלאמו for תְּמַלְּאֵם, for there are many examples of this way of speaking; e. g., (Judges 1:15) "the south country נְתַתָּ֥ה לִּ֖י", which is the same as נָתַתָּ לִי, "thou hast given to me"; (Genesis 37:4) "And they were not able דַּבְּר֥וֹ peaceably", which is the same as דַּבֵּר עִמּוֹ "to speak with him"; (Jeremiah 10:20) "My children יְצָאוּנִי which is the same as יָצְאוּ מִמֶּנִּי "have gone away from me"; (Job. 31:37) "the number of my steps אַגִּ֥ידֶנּוּ which is the same as אַגִּיד לוֹ "I would declare unto him". Similarly here: תמלאמו means תְּמַלְּאֵם נַפְשִׁי "my soul shall be filled with them".
ארק חרבי Translate this as the Targum: I WILL DRAW [MY SWORD]. Because one empties the scabbard when one draws out the sword and it (the scabbard) then remains empty (ריק), the, expression "emptying" is appropriate to it (to the act of drawing the sword), as in (Genesis 42:35) "emptying (מריקים) their sacks"; (Jeremiah 48:12) "And they shall empty (יריקו) his vessels (of wine)". Now do not say that the expression "emptiness" in these examples does not apply to the thing which comes out, but that it applies to the scabbard and the sack and the vessels from which these things come out and not to the sword and to the wine (it is the scabbard, the sack and the vessels which are empty not the sword, the corn and the wine), — and consequently give a forced explanation of ארק חרבי in the sense of the verb in (Genesis 14:14) "He armed (וירק) his trained servants", saying that it means, "I will arm myself with my sword", for we do, indeed, find the expression "empty" applied also to the thing which, comes out of a receptacle; e. g., (Song 1:3) "oil which is emptied (תורק)"; (Jeremiah 48:11) "it (the wine) hath not been emptied (הורק) from vessel to vessel". It does not say here "the vessel hath not been emptied", but "the wine has not been emptied (הורק) from vessel to vessel"; consequently this expression is applied to the wine. Exactly like the phrase in this verse, is (Ezekiel 28:7) "And they shall draw their swords (והריקו חרבותם) against the beauty of thy wisdom", in the chapter about Hiram.
תורישמו This is an expression for poverty and need, (meaning "my hand shall make them poor"), just as, (I Samuel 2:27) "He maketh poor (מורישׁ) and maketh rich."

Verse 10

נשפת — an expression for "blowing". Similar is (Isaiah 40:24) "He bloweth (נשׁף) upon them".
צללו means THEY SANK, they went deep, — an expression of the same root as (Psalms 69:3) מצולה "the depths".
כעופרת LIKE LEAD: old French plomb.

Verse 11

באלם means AMONGST THE MIGHTY, just as (Ezekiel 17:13) "and the mighty of (אילי) the land he took away"; (Psalms 22:20) "O, thou my strength (אילותי) hasten to my help".
נורא תהלות means Thou art an object of dread so that people do not recount thy praises fearing lest these may be enumerated less then they really are, just as it is written (Psalms 65:2) "To Thee, silence is praise".

Verse 12

נטית ימינך THOU INCLINEST THY RIGHT HAND — When the Holy One, blessed be He, inclines His hand the wicked cease to be and fall — because everything is held in His hand and consequently falls when He inclines it. Similarly it states, (Isaiah 31:3) "When the Lord inclineth His hand, he that helpeth shall stumble and he that is helped shall fall". A parable: it may be compared to glass vessels held in a man's hand: if he inclines his hand a little they fall and are shattered to pieces (cf. Mekhilta).
תבלעמו ארץ THE EARTH SWALLOWED THEM — From this it may be gathered that they received the privilege of burial as a reward for having said, (Exodus 9:27) "The Lord is righteous" (Mekhilta).

Verse 13

נהלת is of the same root, conjugation and meaning as מנהל a leader; Onkelos translated it in the sense of bearing and carrying, but he was not particular to translate according to the Hebrew expression (i. e., to translate literally)

Verse 14

ירגזון means THEY TREMBLE (not they will tremble).
ישבי פלשת [REIGS SEIZED] THE INHABITANTS OF PALESTINE, because they slew the children of Ephraim who anticipated the end fixed for the period of slavery and left Egypt forcibly, as is explained in Chronicles (1 7:21) "[The sons of Ephraim…] whom the men of Gath slew" (Mekhilta).

Verse 15

אלופי אדום אילי מואב [THEN WERE PERTURBED] THE CHIEFTAINS OF EDOM, THE MIGHTY MEN OF MOAB — But surely they had no cause to fear anything because they (the Israelites) were not marching against them! But the explanation is, that they were perturbed by annoyance, because they were annoyed and distressed by the glory that Israel had achieved (cf. Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 251:11).
נמגו means THEY MELTED — just as, (Psalms 65:11) "Thou makest it soft (תמגגנה) with showers". They said, "They are marching against us to destroy us and to take possession of our land" (therefore they melted away from fear, and were not merely perturbed in mind) (Mekhilta).

Verse 16

תפל עליהם אימתה THERE SHALL FALL UPON THEM DREAD — upon those of them who are far away (Mekhilta),
ופחד AND HORROR — shall fall upon those of them who are near by; and all this really happened just as the matter is stated, (Joshua 2:10) "For we have heard how the Lord dried up [the waters of the Red Sea]" (Mekhilta).
עד יעבר עד יעבר... TILL THY PEOPLE PASS … TILL THE PEOPLE PASS — The repetition must be explained as the Targum takes it (until they pass over the Arnon, until they pass over the Jordan).
קנית denotes [THE PEOPLE] WHICH THOU HOLDEST DEAR above all peoples — like an article purchased (קנוי) at a high price and which is therefore held in affection by the man who bought it.

Verse 17

תבאמו THOU WILL BRING THEM IN — Moses foresaw by prophetic inspiration that he would not enter the Holy Land: on this account it is not stated here, "Thou wilt bring us in" (Mekhilta).

מכון לשבתך THE PLACE FOR THY RESIDENCE — the Sanctuary here below will be exactly opposite the Divine Throne above which פעלת THOU HAST MADE (Mekhilta).
מקדש ה׳ The accent on it (the word מקדש) is a Zakef Gadol (a disjunctive accent) which serves to separate it from the word expressing the Divine Name (ה׳) which follows it, so that the translation is: "The sanctuary which Thy hands have established, O Lord". The Temple is an object of affection to God because the Universe was created by one hand — as it is stated, (Isaiah 48:13) "Yea, My hand hath laid the foundation of the earth" — whilst the Temple by two hands, as stated here. And when will it be rebuilt by God, with the two hands? At the time when "the Lord shall reign for ever and ever": at that future period when all the kingdom will be His (Mekhilta).

Verse 18

לעלם ועד The word ועד is an expression denoting ETERNITY — The ו in it is a root-letter, and consequently it is vowelled with a Patach; but in the similar word in (Jeremiah 29:23) "I am He that knoweth and am witness (ועד)", where the ו is a servile letter (a prefix) it is vowelled with a Kametz.

Verse 19

כי בא סוס פרעה means WHEN [THE HORSES] CAME.

Verse 20

ותקח מרים הנביאה AND MIRIAM THE PROPHETESS TOOK — But where had she prophesied? When she was THE SISTER OF AARON alone — before Moses was born she said, "My mother will at some time bear a son who will deliver Israel etc.", as is stated in Treatise Sotah 12b (cf. Megillah 14a). Another explanation of אחות אהרן, the sister of Aaron: because he jeopardised his life for her by entreating on her behalf and so possibly incurring God's displeasure when she was stricken with leprosy, she is called by his name (Mekhilta; cf. Rashi Genesis 34:25).
את התף A TIMBREL — an instrument for a particular kind of music.
בתפים ובמחלת WITH TIMBRELS AND WITH DANCES — The righteous women in that generation were confident that God would perform miracles for them and they accordingly had brought timbrels with them from Egypt (Mekhilta).

Verse 21

ותען להם מרים AND MIRIAM SANG UNTO THEM — Moses sang the Song to the men — he sang it and they repeated it after him; and Miriam sang the Song to the women and they repeated it after her (Mekhilta).

Verse 22

וישע משה AND MOSES CAUSED [ISRAEL] TO JOURNEY — He made them journey against their own will, because the Egyptians had adorned their horses with ornaments of gold and silver and with precious stones, and the Israelites were finding these in the sea. Greater, indeed, was the booty they obtained at the Red Sea then the booty they had brought out of Egypt — as it is said (Song 1:11) "Circlets of gold (the booty of the Sea) will we make thee together with the studs of silver" (which we brought forth from Egypt) (Mekhilta). On this account he was compelled to make them journey on against their will.

Verse 23

ויבאו מרתה AND THEY CAME TO MARAH — The word מרתה is the same as למרה: a ה at the end of a word (as a suffix) replaces a ל at its beginning (as a prefix). The ת takes the place of the ה which is rooted in (an integral part of) the word מרה; when it is joined with another letter, viz., when it is attached to the ה which is added to the word in place of the ל, the ה of the primary form (the ordinary form of the noun from which longer forms are made by the addition of suffixes) is changed into a ת. Thus, also, every ה which is a root-letter (a letter in the primary form of the noun) is changed into a ת when it is joined to another letter. E. g., we have (Isaiah 27:4) "Fury (חמה) is not in Me", but (Esther 1:12) "And his fury (חמתו) burned within him"; you see that the ה of the ground-form is changed into a ת because it is to be joined to the ו which has been added. Similar are: (Leviticus 25:44) "Manservant and handmaid (אמה)", but (Genesis 30:3) "Behold, my handmaid (אמתי) Bilhah"; (Genesis 2:7) "a creature of life (חיה)", but (Job 33:20) "His life (חיתו) maketh him to abhor bread"; (Judges 4:5) "Between Ramah (רמה) [and Beth-el]", but (I Samuel 7:17) "And his return was to Ramah (הרמתה)" the latter example being exactly parallel to that in this verse (מרה - מרתה).

Verse 24

וילנו AND THEY MURMURED — This is a Niphal form, and similarly the Targum is a Niphal form: ואתרעמו (the Ithpael form in Aramaic corresponds to the Hebrew Niphal). And such is the way in which the expression denoting murmuring (from root לון) is employed: to refer back the matter (the action of murmuring) to the person (the subject of the verb); thus one says מתלונן and מתרועם and one does not say לונן and רועם. So, too, the Frenchman says "decomplaisant se" in old French, where it turns back the matter (the action) to himself (the subject) by saying, "se", English himself.

Verse 25

שם לו שם HERE HE MADE FOR THEM [A STATUTE AND AN ORDINANCE) — At Marah He gave them a few sections of the Torah in order that they might engage in the study thereof; viz., the sections containing the command regarding the sabbath, the red heifer and the administration of justice (Mekhilta; Sanhedrin 56b).
ושם נסהו AND THERE HE TRIED THEM (lit., He tried him) — "him" (singular) means the people; and He saw their stubbornness: that they did not consult with Moses in a respectful fashion: "Entreat mercy for us that we may have water to drink" — but that they murmured.

Verse 26

אם שמע תשמע IF THOU WILL DILIGENTLY HEARKEN — this implies acceptance — that they should take upon themselves the duty of performing God's commands.
תעשה AND IF THOU WILT DO — this implies the performance of the commands.
והאזנת means THOU WILT INCLINE THE EAR to be punctilious in the practice of the details.
כל חקיו ALL HIS STATUTES — Matters which are only the decrees of the King (decrees of God imposed by Him, as King, upon us, His subjects) and which appear to have no reason, and at which the evil inclination cavils saying, "What sense is there in prohibiting these? Why should they be prohibited?" — For instance: the prohibition of wearing a mixture of wool and linen, and of eating swine's flesh, and the law regarding the red heifer, and similar matters (cf. Yoma 67b).

לא אשים עליך I WILL NOT PLACE ON THEE — and if I do place them on thee because thou refusest to hearken to My voice, it will be as though they had not been placed on thee, for if thou repentest of thy disobedience I will remove them immediately, כי אני ה׳ רפאך BECAUSE I AM THE LORD THAT HEALETH THEE. This is its Midrashic explanation (Mekhilta). But according to its literal sense the meaning is: For I am the Lord who healeth thee and teacheth thee the Law and Commandments in order that thou mayst be saved from them (these diseases) — like a physician who says to a man: Do not eat this thing lest it will bring you into danger from this disease. So, too, it states, (Proverbs 3:8) "It (obedience to God) will be wholesome to thy body" (implying that disease will not fall upon thee) (Mekhilta).

Verse 27

שתים עשרה עינת מים TWELVE SPRINGS OF WATER — A number corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel were ready for them (Mekhilta).
ושבעים תמרים AND SEVENTY PALM-TREES — corresponding to the seventy elders (Mekhilta).

Verse 28

Chapter 16

Verse 1

בחמשה עשר יום ON THE FIFTEENTH DAY — The day of this encampment is specially mentioned because on that day there came to an end the cake (provisions) they had brought with them from Egypt and they now needed the Manna, thus informing us that of the remains of the dough they had prepared in Egypt (cf. Rashi on Exodus 12:33) they ate sixty-one meals. For the Manna fell for them on the sixteenth day of Iyar, which was the first day of the week, just as is stated in the Treatise Shabbat 87b.

Verse 2

וילנו AND THEY MURMURED, because the bread had come to an end.

Verse 3

מי יתן מותנו WOULD THAT WE HAD DIED — The word מותנו means "that we should die"; it is not a noun with the same meaning as מיתתנו "our death", but it is an infinitive like עשותנו and חנותנו and שובנו which signify "that we should make", "that we should encamp", "that we should return". In the Targum it is rendered by לוי דמיתנא which is really the Targum rendering of (Numbers 14:2) לו מתנו "Would that we were dead" (cf. Rashi on Exodus 14:12).

Verse 4

דבר יום ביומו THE THING OF THE DAY ON ITS DAY — what is needed for a day's eating shall they collect on its (that) day, and they shall not today collect what will be needed tomorrow (cf. Mekhilta).
למען אנסנו הילך בתורתי THAT I MAY TRY THEM WHETHER THEY WILL WALK IN MY LAW — whether they will observe the commands associated with it: viz.,

that they should not leave any overnight, and that they should not go out on the Sabbath to collect it.

Verse 5

והיה משנה AND IT SHALL BE DOUBLE — for today and for tomorrow.
משנה DOUBLE of what they were accustomed to collect on each day of the other days of the week. I say that the words, אשר יביאו והיה משנה "what they bring shall be double", imply that after they have brought it home they will find it double in measure of what they had been gathering and measuring each day. This is the force of: "they collected double bread" (v. 22) — when it was collected it was found by them to be double food, and this is the meaning of (v. 29), "therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days": He gives you a blessing — old French foison, — abundance in the house that you may fill the Omer twice, as bread for two days.

Verse 6

ערב is the same as לערב AT EVENING
וידעתם כי ה׳ הוציא אתכם מארץ מצרים YE SHALL KNOW THAT THE LORD HATH BROUGHT YOU OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT — Since you said to us, (v. 3) "for ye have brought us forth" you shall know that it was not we who brought you forth, but it was God who brought you forth for He will bring quails for you.

Verse 7

ובקר וראיתם AND IN THE MORNING YE SHALL SEE [THE GLORY OF THE LORD] — Not in reference to that glory of which it stated, (v. 10) "And behold the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud" is this said, but thus, in effect, did he say to them: In the evening ye shall know that His hand has the power to give you your desire and He will give you flesh; but not with a radiant countenance will He give it to you, because you have asked Him something that is not proper (since one can exist without eating meat), and out of a full stomach (i. e. you really have meat for you have an abundance of cattle); but the bread for which you have asked out of necessity — when it falls in the morning you will behold the glory of the radiance of His countenance (His glory), because He will make it fall for you in a manner that is indicative of His love (Mekhilta) — in the morning, whilst there is yet time to prepare it, and there shall be dew above it and dew below it as though it were carefully packed in a chest (Yoma 75b).
את תלנתיכם על ה׳ this is the same as אשר על ה׳ [תלנתיכם] YOUR MURMURINGS WHICH ARE AGAINST THE LORD.
ונחנו מה (lit., and we, what?) means AND WE, WHAT ARE WE accounted (of what importance are we?),
כי תלינו עלינו THAT YOU MAKE everyone MURMUR AGAINST US — your sons, and your wives, and your daughters and the mixed multitude. — And whether I like it or not I am forced to explain the word תַּלִּינוּ in the sense of "you make (people) do something", viz., murmur (i. e. what we call the Hiphil conjugation), because of its (the ל) be eshed and because of the קרי. For if it (the ל) were weak (i. e. without a Dagesh), I would explain it in the sense of "ye do something" (our Kal), just as, (Exodus 17:3) "And the people murmured (וַיָּלֶן) against Moses", or, if there was still a Dagesh but there was no י in it, so that it could be read תֻּלּוֹנוּ, I would explain it as meaning "ye put yourself in a state of murmuring" (our Niphal; cf. Rashi on Exodus 15:24). Now, however, it being as it is, it must imply "you make others murmur", just as in the case of the spies it states, (Numbers 14:36) "And they made all the congregation to murmur (וַיַּלִּינוּ)

against him" (where וַיַּלִּינוּ is the same grammatical form, so far as conjugation is concerned, as תַּלִּינוּ, but as it has an object, כל העדה, it cannot mean "And they murmured", and must necessarily mean "they made the congregation murmur).

Verse 8

בשר לאכל FLESH TO EAT— but it does not add as it does in the next phrase לִשְׂבְּעָה, "to satisfaction"; the Torah thus teaches us a rule of conduct — that one should not eat meat to satiety. And what did He see (what reason had He) that He made bread fall for them in the morning and flesh at evening? Because the bread they asked for was a proper thing to demand since it is impossible for a person to exist without bread; but meat they asked for improperly, for they had abundant cattle, and besides it was possible for them to exist without flesh. On this account He gave it to them at evening, at a time of (when it would cause them) trouble, a manner which was not favourable to them (Mekhilta; Yoma 75).
אשר אתם מלינים עליו means [YOUR MURMURINGS] WHICH YOU MAKE others who hear you murmuring MURMUR AGAINST HIM.

Verse 9

קרבו APPROACH [BEFORE THE LORD] — to the place where the cloud will descend.

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

השליו THE QUAILS — a species of fowl which is very fatty (cf. Yoma 75b).
היתה שכבת הטל THERE WAS A LAYER OF DEW — Consequently the dew was lying upon the Manna. In another passage, however, it says, (Numbers 11:9) "And when the dew came down [upon the camp at night, the manna fell upon it]" and so there was dew under the Manna! Thus we see that the dew fell upon the ground and the Manna fell upon it, and then dew fell again upon this, and so it was as though it were carefully packed in a chest (Yoma 75b).

Verse 14

ותעל שכבת הטל וגו׳ AND WHEN THE LAYER OF DEW WENT UP etc. — When the sun rose the dew which was lying upon the Manna ascended sunward, as is the manner of dew — that it ascends sunward; even if you were to fill an egg-shell with dew and close up its opening and place it in the sun, it (the egg-shell with the dew in it) will rise of its own accord into the air, (in consequence of the tendency of the dew to rise upwards). — But our Rabbis explained that these words imply that the dew rose from the ground into the air. — When the layer of dew went up the Manna became visible, and they looked, (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Beshalach 20; Shemot Rabbah 38:4)
והנה על המדבר דק AND BEHOLD, UPON THE SURFACE OF THE DESERT there was etc.

דק, a THIN object,
מחספס uncovered — and there is no other example of this word in the Scriptures. One may also explain מחספס as having the same meaning as חפיסה in (Mishna Bava Metzia 1:8) חפיסה ודלוסקמא, "a valise and chest", in Mishnaic Hebrew, and the meaning would be, that when it became uncovered from the layer of dew they saw that there had been a thin object enclosed in it i. e. enclosed between the two layers of dew. Onkelos translates it by מקלף peeled (flaky), taking מחספס in the sense of, and from a similar root as, (Genesis 30:37) "peeling off (מחשף) the white".
ככפר AS HOAR FORST — כפר is old French gelide. The Targum renders דק by דעדק כגיר, the word גיר occurring in (Isaiah 27:9) "גיר-stones" — this is a kind of black colour — just as we enumerate amongst the kinds of earth which may be used for covering the blood of a wild animal or bird after it has been slaughtered "powdered chalk (גיר) and orpiment" (Chullin 88b). Onkelos renders the entire phrase by "powdered like גיר, like hoar-frost upon the ground", meaning that it was as fine as גיר and lay congealed as frost in the ground. This is therefore the meaning of דק ככפור: "spread out fine but yet one atom hanging to another like hoar-frost". דק is old French tenuis — meaning that it formed a thin incrustation on top. The word וכגיר which Onkelos has in his translation is an addition to the Hebrew text, there being no word corresponding to it in the verse.

Verse 15

מן הוא means this is something prepared for food, as in (Daniel 1:5) "And the king appointed (וימן) for them,".
כי לא ידעו מה הוא FOR THEY KNEW NOT WHAT IS WAS so that they could call it by its name.

Verse 16

עמר — the name of a measure.
מספר נפשתיכם — The second half of the verse means ACCORDING TO (supply כ before מספר) THE NUMBER OF PERSONS WHOM A MAN HAS (איש לאשר being the same as אשר לאיש) IN HIS TENT SHALL YE TAKE AN OMER FOR EVERY HEAD (לַגֻּלְגֹּלֶת the definite article with the ל having distributive force: each and every).

Verse 17

המרבה והממעיט SOME MUCH, SOME LITTLE — There were some who gathered much and there were some who gathered little; and when they came home they measured it out by an Omer, each what he had gathered, and they then found that he who had gathered much had no excess over an Omer for each head that was in his tent, and that he who had gathered less did not find less than an Omer for each head, and this was a great miracle that was wrought in respect of it (the Manna).

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

ויותרו אנשים BUT SOME MEN LEFT OF IT — Dathan and Abiram (Shemot Rabbah 24:10; cf. Rashi on Exodus 2:13).
וירם תולעים AND IT BRED WORMS — the word וירם is of the same meaning and root as רִמָּה, worm.
ויבאש AND IT STANK — This is an inverted verse, because first it must have stunk and afterwards have become wormy, just as it is said, (v. 24) "And it did not stink and there was no worm therein — for this is the way of all things that become wormy (Mekhilta).

Verse 21

וחם השמש ונמס AND WHEN THE SUN WAXED HOT, IT MELTED — What was left in the field (outside the inhabited camp) melted and ran in streams; the harts and the roes drank therefrom, and the nations of the world hunted them and experienced through them the taste of the Manna, and thereby understood how great was Israel's excellency (Mekhilta).
ונמס Onkelos translates by פָּשֵׁר, having the same meaning as פושרים, tepid waters: through the sun it became warm and turned into tepid water; old French détemperer. An example of it (פשר) occurs in Treatise Sanhedrin at the end of the chapter that begins, ארבע מיתות (Sanhedrin 67b).

Verse 22

לקטו לחם משנה THEY COLLECTED DOUBLE BREAD — when they measured in their tents what they had gathered they found it double — two Omers for each person (cf. Rashi on v. 5). (Rashi appears to supply אשר before לקטו: It came to pass on the sixth day, what they gathered לָקְטוּ אֲשֶׁר, was double bread.) A Midrashic explanation is that משנה in לחם משנה signifies מְשֻׁנֶּה different, changed, — that day it was changed for the better as regards its smell and its taste (Tanchuma Yashan).
ויגידו למשה AND THEY TOLD IT TO MOSES — They asked him, "How is this day different from other days?" — From this we may learn that Moses had not yet told them the section regarding the Sabbath which he had been commanded to say to them: (v. 5) "And it shall come to pass on the sixth day they shall prepare etc." — he did not do this until they asked him, "What is this?" Then he said to them, (v. 23) "This is that which the Lord hath said" this is that which I was commanded to say to you previously, but I forgot to do so (Cf. Shemot Rabbah 25:10). On this account Scripture (God) punished him, in that He said to him, (v. 28) "How long will ye refuse [to keep my commandments]", and He did not exclude him from the general body, by saying, "how long will they refuse etc."

Verse 23

את אשר תאפו אפו THAT WHICH YOU WOULD BAKE, BAKE whatever you wish to bake (cf. Onkelos: די אתון עתידין למפא and Rashi on אז ישיר משה) in the oven bake to-day — all that you will need for two days; and what you require to boil of it in water boil to-day. The expression baking applies to bread, (cf. Rashi on Genesis 40:1) and the expression boiling to a cooked dish.
למשמרת means as something put by (to be kept).

Verse 24

Verse 25

ויאמר משה אכלהו היום AND MOSES SAID, EAT THAT THIS DAY etc. — In the morning, when they had been accustomed to go forth and gather it, they came to enquire, "Shall we go out or not?" He replied to them, "What you have in your possession eat (אכלהו היום)". In the evening they again came before him and asked him, "How is it now about going out?" He answered them, שבת היום "Today is the Sabbath". He saw that they were worried believing perhaps the Manna had stopped and would not again fall; he therefore said to them, "Today ye shall not find it [in the field]". What reason was there to say "Today"? — Today you will not find it, but tomorrow you will find it (Mekhilta).

Verse 26

וביום השביעי שבת means but on the seventh day is a day of rest (supply the word הוא); and לא יהיה בו means the Manna shall not be on it; and this verse comes (is written) only to include the Day of Atonement and the Festivals [as being also days when no Manna would fall] (Mekhilta).

Verse 27

Verse 28

עד אנה מאנתם HOW LONG WILL YE REFUSE — A common proverb says: with the thorn the cabbage which is near it, is also stricken — through the wicked the good are brought into disgrace (cf. Rashi on v. 22) (Bava Kamma 92a).

Verse 29

ראו SEE with your very eyes (i. e. the word is used literally and not figuratively in the sense of "consider") that the Lord in His glory (i. e. the Lord Himself) admonishes you regarding the Sabbath, for, behold, a miracle is performed for you on the eve of every Sabbath in that He gives you then bread for two days.
שבו איש תחתיו ABIDE YE EVERY MAN IN HIS PLACE (lit., beneath himself) — From here the Sages derived a support for the permission that a person who has gone beyond the Sabbath limit may move within a space of four cubits (Mekhilta; Eruvin 51a).
אל יצא איש ממקמו LET NO MAN GO OUT OF HIS PLACE — These are the 2,000 cubits of the Sabbath limit (Mekhilta); but this is not expressly mentioned here, because the command relating to the Sabbath limits is only an institution of the Sopherim. The text itself was really spoken about those who gathered the Manna (i. e., it does not constitute a prohibition regarding the Sabbath for all men and at all periods but was intended to forbid anyone to go out into the field to gather the Manna; cf. Sotah 30b).

Verse 30

Verse 31

והוא כזרע גד לבן AND IT WAS LIKE THE CORIANDER SEED, WHITE — a herb, the name of which is (in old French) coriandre; its seed is round and is not white, whilst the Manna was white. It follows therefore, that it is compared to coriander seed only in respect to its roundness — so that the meaning is: it was like coriander seed, and it was white (Yoma 75a).

כצפיחת LIKE FLAT CAKES — dough which is fried in honey. In the Mishnaic speech it is called אסקריטין (Pesachim 37a), and this is the translation of Onkelos here.

Verse 32

למשמרת means to put by.
לדרתיכם FOR YOUR GENERATIONS e. g., in the days of Jeremiah: when Jeremiah was rebuking them (the people), saying, "Why do you not engage yourselves with the Torah?", and they answered him, "Shall we leave our work and engage ourselves with the Torah? From where shall we earn a living?", he brought out to them the cruse of Manna and said to them, (Jeremiah 2:31) "[O Generation], see ye the thing of the Lord!" It is not said "Hear the word" but "See the thing"! — This thing is what your fathers were fed with. The Omnipresent God has many messengers (many means) to provide food for those who fear Him (Mekhilta).

Verse 33

צנצנת is an earthern flask, as it is translated in the Targum (cf. Mekhilta).
והנח אתו לפני ה' AND LAY IT UP BEFORE THE LORD — before the Ark; this verse, of course, was not spoken until the tent of meeting had been built and the Ark was placed therein, but it is written here in the chapter about the Manna, as being its appropriate place.

Verse 34

Verse 35

ארבעים שנה FORTY YEARS — But was not this period short of thirty days, since it was on the sixteenth of Iyar that the Manna fell for them for the first time and on the fifteenth of Nisan that it ceased, as it is said, (Joshua 5:12) "And the Manna ceased on the morrow"? (cf. the preceding verse which speaks of the day when they ate unleavened bread). But this tells us that in the cakes that Israel had brought out of Egypt and which they ate from the 15th of Nisan to the 16th of Iyar after they left Egypt they experienced the taste of Manna (so that the 40 years mentioned here as those during which they ate Manna may be regarded as complete) (Kiddushin 38a).
אל ארץ נושבת TO A LAND INHABITED — after they had crossed the Jordan, [for that territory on the other side of the Jordan was cultivated (מְיֻשָּׁבֶת, which is regarded as the equivalent of נושבת; cf. Rashi on Genesis 36:20) and good, as it is said, (Deuteronomy 3:25) "Let me pass over, I pray thee, and see the good land that is on the other side of the Jordan". And the translation of נושבת by Onkelos is יתבתא which means to say מיושבת, "settled"].
אל קצה ארץ כנען UNTO THE EXTREMITY OF THE LAND OF CANAAN — at the beginning of the border before they passed over the Jordan, that is, in the plains of Moab — consequently they (these two descriptions of the locality) contradict each other! But the explanation is that in the plains of Moab, when Moses died (cf. Deuteronomy 34:1) on the seventh of Adar, the Manna really ceased to fall but they had a sufficient supply from the Manna which they had gathered on that day to last until they had brought the Omer on the sixteenth of Nisan in Canaan itself, the cultivated land, as it is said, (Joshua 5:11) "And they did eat of the produce of the land on the morrow after the Passover" (Kiddushin 38a).

Verse 36

עשירית האפה [THE OMER] IS THE TENTH PART OF AN EPHAH — The Ephah is three Seahs, and the Seah is six Kabs, and the Kab is four Logs and the Log has the capacity of six eggs: it follows, therefore, that the tenth of an Ephah has the capacity of forty-three and a fifth eggs — and this is the minimum quantity of dough for the Challa (the minimum quantity to which applies the injunction to separate a portion of the dough; cf. Numbers 15:20), and the measure for the meal offering (cf. Rashi on Eruvin 83b).

Chapter 17

Verse 1

Verse 2

מה תנסון TO WHY DO YE TRY [THE LORD] by saying, "Will He be able to give us water in an arid land?"

Verse 3

Verse 4

עוד מעט YET A LITTLE means, if I wait but a little more they will stone me.

Verse 5

עבר לפני העם PASS BEFORE THE PEOPLE and see whether they will stone you! (Midrash Tanchuma, Beshalach 23) Why have you uttered a slander against My children?
וקח אתך מזקני ישראל AND TAKE WITH THEE OF THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL as witnesses — that they may see that it is by your agency that the water will come forth from the rock and that people may not say that there had been springs there from time immemorial (Mekhilta).
ומטך אשר הכית בו את היאר AND THY STAFF, WHEREWITH THOU SMOTEST THE RIVER — What is the force of the words "wherewith thou smotest the river" — they are apparently superfluous? But these are added because the Israelites had said of the staff that it was intended only for punishment: by it Pharaoh and the Egyptians had been stricken with many plagues in Egypt and at the Red Sea. On this account it is stated here: take the staff wherewith thou smotest the river — they shall see now that it is also intended for good (Mekhilta).

Verse 6

והכית בצור AND THOU SHALT SMITE THE ROCK — It does not say here "thou shalt smite על הצור", upon the surface of the rock, but בצור, right into the rock — from this it follows that the rod must have been composed of a kind of hard material the name of which is sapphire, and the rock was split by it (Mekhilta).

Verse 7

Verse 8

ויבא עמלק THEN CAME AMALEK — Scripture places this section immediately after this preceding verse (they said, "Is the Lord among us or not?") to imply, "I am ever among you and ready at hand for every thing you may need, and yet you say, "Is the Lord among us or not?" By your lives, I swear that the hound (Amalek) shall come and bite you, and you will cry for Me and then you will know where I am!" A parable: it may be compared to a man who carried his son upon his shoulder, and went out on a journey. The son saw an article and said, "Father, pick up that thing and give it to me". He gave it to him, and so a second time and so also a third time. They met a certain man to whom the son said, "Have you seen my father anywhere?" Whereupon his father said to him, "Don't you know where I am?" — He, therefore, cast him off from himself and a hound came and bit him (Midrash Tanchuma, Yitro 3).

Verse 9

בחר לנו CHOOSE OUT MEN FOR US — for me and for you: he (Moses) placed him (Joshua) on the same level with himself. They (the Rabbis) derived from here the teaching: let thy disciple's honour be as dear to thee as thy own. And whence may we derive the next statement in thee well-known passage: and thy colleague's honour as dear to thee as the reverence due to thy teacher? Because it is said, (Numbers 12:11) "And Aaron spake to Moses, "I beseech thee, my lord" — but surely Aaron was older than his brother and yet by addressing him as "my lord" he treated his colleague (Moses) as his teacher! "And the reverence due to thy teacher as the reverence due to God" — whence may this be derived? Because it is said, (Numbers 11:28) "[And he (Joshua) said (to his teacher, Moses)] "My lord, Moses, כלאם", destroy them (כָּלֵם) from out of the world! they who rebel against thee deserve to be destroyed just the same as though they had rebelled against the Holy One, blessed be He (Mekhilta).
וצא הלחם GO OUT, FIGHT — go out from the cloud and fight against him (Mekhilta),
מחר TO-MORROW, at the time of the battle, I will take my stand.
בחר לנו אנשים CHOOSE US MEN — brave men, and men who fear sin (אנשים does not mean merely men — males, but men fit for war and at the same time God-fearing) — choose these so that their merit may stand them in good stead (cf. (Mekhilta). Another explanation: בחר לנו אנשים Choose us men who know how to make witchcraft of none effect; he said this because the sons of Amalek were wizards (cf. Rashi on v. 12)

Verse 10

AND MOSES AND AARON AND HUR — From this we may infer as regards a public fast that three men must pass before the Holy Ark (i. e. must officiate at prayer) — we may infer this because they (the Israelites) were then engaged in fasting (Mekhilta).
חור HUR was the son of Miriam and her husband was Caleb (Sotah 11b).

Verse 11

כאשר ירים משה ידו WHEN MOSES LIFTED UP HIS HAND — But could Moses' hands win the battle etc.? See the whole passage as it is given in the Treatise Rosh Hashanah 29a.

Verse 12

וידי משה כבדים BUT MOSES HANDS BECAME HEAVY — Because he had shown himself remiss in the duty that was his, of waging war himself against Amalek, and had appointed another in his stead, his hands became heavy (cf. (Mekhilta).
ויקחו AND THEY TOOK — Aaron and Hur took —
אבן וישימו תחתיו A STONE AND THEY PUT IT UNDER HIM [AND HE SAT THEREON] — but he did not seat himself upon a cushion or a pillow, for he said, "Israel is in tribulation; I will be in tribulation together with them". (Taanit 11a).
ויהי ידיו אמונה (lit., and he was, his hands faithfulness) — and Moses was in the condition that his hands were in faithfulness — spread forth to heaven in a confident and firm prayer.
עד בא השמש UNTIL THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN — Because the Amalekites had calculated the hours by astrology, as to which hour they would prove victorious, Moses held back the sun against them and brought the hours into confusion (Midrash Tanchuma, Beshalach 28).

Verse 13

ויחלש יהושע AND JOSHUA DISCOMFITED [AMALEK] (more lit., he weakened Amalek) — he cut off the heads of his mighty men and left only the weak amongst them, and he did not kill all of them (leaving the weak men alive: thus Amalek was made weak, and powerless for further mischief). From this we may learn that they acted according to the expressed pronouncement of the Shechina (otherwise they would, in the stress of battle, not have so discriminated) (Mekhilta).

Verse 14

כתב זאת זכרון WRITE THIS FOR A MEMORIAL, that Amalek came to wage war against Israel before any other nation.
ושים באזני יהושע AND PUT INTO THE EARS OF JOSHUA, who will bring Israel into the Holy Land, that he must command Israel to pay him his recompense. Here it was intimated to Moses (by the mere statement that Joshua should in some future time carry out the injunction to destroy Amalek) that Joshua would bring Israel into the Holy Land (cf. (Mekhilta).
כי מחה אמחה BECAUSE I WOULD UTTERLY BLOT OUT [THE REMEMBRANCE OF AMALEK] — the reason why I admonish you thus is because (כי) I desire to blot it out.

Verse 15

ויקרא שמו AND HE CALLED HIS (or its) NAME — the name of the altar,
ה' נסי (lit., the Lord is my banner or my miracle) — The Holy One, blessed be He, here performed a miracle for us. It does not mean that the altar was named ה', "the Lord, my banner", but the reason for so calling it was that anyone mentioning the altar's name would thereby remember the miracle which the Omni-present had performed, since he would be saying: the Lord, He is our Miracle (cf. Rashi on Genesis 33:20).

Verse 16

ויאמר AND HE SAID — i. e. Moses said.
כי יד על כס יה BECAUSE THE HAND IS UPON THE THRONE OF JAH — the hand of the Holy One, blessed be He, is raised to swear by His throne that He will have war and enmity against Amalek to all eternity. And what is the force of כס — why does it not say as usual כסא? And the Divine Name, also, is divided into half (יה is only the half of the Tetragrammaton)! The Holy One, blessed be He, swears that His Name will not be perfect nor

His throne perfect until the name of Amalek be entirely blotted out. But when his name is blotted out then will His (God's) Name be perfect and His throne perfect, as it is said, (Psalms 9:7) "The enemy is come to an end, he whose swords were for ever" — and this refers to Amalek of whom it is written, (Amos 1:11; the paragraph is a prophecy against Edom — Esau — the father of Amalek) "he kept his wrath for ever". The verse in the Psalm continues: "and thou didst uproot enemies, their very memorial is perished", What does it say immediately after this? (Psalms 9:8) "But the Lord (the Divine Name as given here is the Tetragrammaton) shall now remain for ever" — you see that the Name will be perfect (after Amalek is entirely rooted out as is mentioned in v. 7); "He establishes his throne (כסא not כס) in righteousness" — so you see that His throne will then be perfect (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 11).

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Chapter 18

Verse 1

וישמע יתרו AND JETHRO HEARD — What was the particular report which he heard so that he came? — The division of the Red Sea and the war with Amalek (cf. (Mekhilta; Zevachim 116a).
יתרו JETHRO — He was called by seven names: Reuel, Jether, Jethro, Hobab, Heber, Keni and Putiel. He was called Jether (from יִתֵּר "to add") because he added (it was through him that there was added) a section to the Torah; viz., that beginning at (21 ff.) "Moreover thou shalt provide". Jethro — so was he called because when he became a proselyte and fulfilled the divine precepts one more letter was added to his name (יתר). Hobab — because he loved (חִבֵּב) the Torah (cf. Mekhilta). — Hobab is certainly identical with Jethro, as it is said, (Judges 4:11) "of the sons of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses" and therefore it is correct to say that Hobab is one of his names. But as to Reuel there are some who say that he is not identical with Jethro, but that he was Hobab's (Jethro's) father, as may be seen from Numbers 10:29. Then what, according to this view, would be the meaning of (Exodus 2:18) "And they came to Reuel, their father" (from which it would appear that Reuel and Jethro are the same)? It means their grandfather, for children call their grandfather: father. This is to be found in Sifrei Bamidbar 78 (on Numbers 10:29).
חתן משה MOSES' FATHER-IN-LAW — Here Jethro prided himself on his relationship to Moses: I, the father-in-law of the king. Previously, however, Moses had made whatever greatness he had hinge upon his relationship to his father-in-law, the chieftain of Midian, as it is said, (Exodus 4:18) "And he returned to Jethro, his father-in-law" (Mekhilta).
למשה ולישראל TO MOSES AND TO ISRAEL — Moses alone is of equal in importance to all Israel (Mekhilta).

את כל אשר עשה ALL THAT [GOD] HAD DONE for them through the falling of the Manna and through the well (cf. Rashi on Numbers 21:17) and by the defeat of Amalek.
כי הוציא ה׳ וגו׳ THAT THE LORD HAD BROUGHT FORTH etc. — this was greater than all other things, and is therefore singled out for mention (cf. Mekhilta).

Verse 2

אחר שלוחיה AFTER HIS HAVING SENT HER AWAY — When God said to him in Midian, (Exodus 4:19, 20) "Go, return to Egypt … and Moses took his wife and his sons etc…. and Aaron went forth towards him and met him at the Mount of God", he (Aaron) said to him, "Who are these?" He answered him, "This is my wife whom I married in Midian and these are my children". He, thereupon, asked him, "Whither are you taking them?" He replied, "To Egypt". Where-upon he said to him, "We have cause to grieve over the former ones (the Israelites already there), and you propose to add to their number!" Moses therefore said to her, "Return to your father's house" — she took her two sons and went away (Mekhilta).

Verse 3

Verse 4

ויצלני מחרב פרעה AND HE DELIVERED ME FROM THE SWORD OF PHARAOH — When Dathan and Abiram made the disclosure regarding the matter of the Egyptian whom Moses had killed and Pharaoh wished to slay Moses, his neck became as a column of marble so that the sword was powerless against him (Shemot Rabbah 1:31; cf. Rashi on Exodus 2:15).

Verse 5

אל המדבר INTO THE DESERT — Indeed we know that they were in the wilderness, and it appears unnecessary to state that Jethro came to Moses there. But by stressing this Scripture is speaking in praise of Jethro: that he was living amidst all the splendour that the world could provide, and nevertheless his heart prompted him to go forth into the desert, a waste place (Mekhilta), to hearken to the words of the Torah.

Verse 6

ויאמר אל משה AND HE SAID UNTO MOSES through a messenger (Mekhilta).
אני חתנך יתרו וגו I, THY FATHER-IN-LAW, JETHRO etc. — If you will not come out for my own sake, come out for the sake of your wife; and if you will not come out for your wife's sake, come out for the sake of your two sons (Mekhilta).

Verse 7

ויצא משה AND MOSES WENT OUT — Great honour, indeed, did Jethro receive at that moment, for as soon as Moses went out to Jethro, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu went out, and who was it that saw these go out and would not himself go out? (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayigash 7)
וישתחו וישק לו AND HE PROSTRATED HIMSELF AND KISSED HIM — From the wording of this statement I do not know who prostrated himself to whom! But when it states in the next words: איש לרעהו, "a man to his fellow", it becomes quite evident; for which of the two is called by the appellation איש, "man"? — This was Moses, as it is said, (Numbers 12:3)

“And the man, Moses”. (Thus it was the man (איש) Moses, who bowed down to his fellow (Mekhilta).

Verse 8

ויספר משה לחתנו AND MOSES RELATED TO HIS FATHER-IN-LAW [ALL THAT THE LORD HAD DONE] — in order to allure his heart that he might attach him to the Torah (Mekhilta).
את כל התלאה ALL THE TRAVAIL that they had experienced at the Red Sea, and that caused by Amalek (Mekhilta).
התלאה — The ל and א are part of the primary form of the word and the ת is a formative letter and a part of the primary form of the noun which sometimes is omitted from it. Similar examples are תרומה and תנופה and תקומה and תנואה.

Verse 9

ויחד יתרו AND JETHRO REJOICED — This is its literal meaning. A Midrashic comment is: his flesh became full of prickles (חדודין — his flesh crept with horror) — he felt grieved at the destruction of Egypt. That is what people say (what the common proverb says): A proselyte even though his heathen descent dates from as far back as the tenth generation, do not speak slightingly of an Aramean (any non-Jew) in his presence (Sanhedrin 94a).
על כל הטובה FOR ALL THE GOODNESS — the goodness in giving the Manna and the well and the Torah — and he rejoiced above all these (more especially), אשר הצילו מיד מצרים THAT HE HAD DELIVERED THEM OUT OF THE HAND OF EGYPT — Until now no slave had ever been able to escape from Egypt because that land was closely shut in on all sides, but these had gone forth six hundred thousand in number (cf. Mekhilta).

Verse 10

אשר הציל אתכם מיד מצרים WHO HATH DELIVERED YOU OUT OF THE HAND OF EGYPT, a hard people,
ומיד פרעה AND OUT OF THE HAND OF PHARAOH, a hard monarch.
מתחת יד מצרים — Translate this as the Targum does: from beneath the authority of Egypt, taking יד as an expression of domination and authority; “the hand” spoken of here is the hand which they imposed heavily upon them — referring to the hard bondage.

Verse 11

עתה ידעתי NOW I KNOW — I indeed knew Him formerly, but now I know Him even more (cf. Mekhilta).
מכל האלהים [GREATER] THAN ALL THE GODS — This tells us that he had a full knowledge of every idol in the world — that he left no idol unworshipped by him (Mekhilta).
כי בדבר אשר זדו עליהם — Understand this as the Targum does for by that very thing with which the Egyptians thought to judge Israel were they themselves judged — they had thought to destroy them by water and they were themselves destroyed by water (cf. Mekhilta).
אשר זדו means in which they had shown themselves wicked. Our Rabbis, however, explained it in the same sense as the root which we find in (Genesis 25:29) “And Jacob was boiling (ויזד) pottage (נזיד) (lit., something boiled)” — in the pot wherein they had boiled, therein were they themselves boiled (Sotah 11a).

Verse 12

עלה — Translate this according to its usual meaning: a burnt-offering, which was burnt entire and completely.
וזבחים AND SACRIFICES — i. e. peace-offerings.
ויבא אהרן וגו׳ AND AARON CAME, etc. — But where had Moses gone? Was it not he who had gone out to meet him and had been the cause of all the honour shown to him? But the explanation why he is not mentioned as having come to eat bread with Jethro is that he was standing by and waiting upon them (Mekhilta).
לפני האלהים BEFORE GOD — From this statement that they were "before God" we may learn that one who takes part in (more lit., who has enjoyment from) a meal at which scholars sit may be regarded as though he has enjoyment from the splendour of the Shechina (Berakhot 64a; cf. Mekhilta).

Verse 13

ויהי ממחרת AND IT CAME TO PASS ON THE MORROW — This was really the day after the Day of Atonement: so have we learnt in Siphré (Mekhilta). Since the Day of Atonement is not mentioned anywhere in this section that deals with the Giving of the Law what is the force of ממחרת? i. e. in relation to what particular day in the history of the Law-giving is the term ממחרת, "on the morrow", used? It means the morrow after he (Moses) descended from the Mount Sinai, and you must admit that it is impossible to say that this was any other day but the morrow after the Day of Atonement because, before the giving of the Torah, one could not say, (v. 16) "and I do make them know the statutes [of God and His laws]" (which are part of the Torah), and from the day when the Torah was given until the Day of Atonement Moses did not sit down to judge the people, since immediately after the Torah was given he ascended the mountain and descended only on the seventeenth of Tammuz when he broke the tablets in pieces. On the next day he again ascended the mountain early in the morning and stayed there eighty days, descending on the Day of Atonement (cf. Tanchuma כי תשא, Rashi on 33:11, Deuteronomy 9:18 and 10:1). Consequently this section is not written (placed) in its chronological order, for this paragraph commencing with ויהי ממחרת and ending with "Moses let his father-in-law go and he (Jethro) went his way into his own land" was not said before the second year after the Exodus. For even according to the view of one who says that Jethro came to Moses before the giving of the Torah (Avodah Zarah 24a) his dismissal into his own land did not take place until the second year, for it is stated here (v. 27) "Moses let his father-in-law go", and we find in the account of Israel's journey through the wilderness beneath their banners (which according to Numbers 10:11 began in the second year) that Moses said to him, (Numbers 10:29, 31) "We are journeying etc…. Forsake us not, I pray thee". Now if this incident happened before the giving of the Torah (including Jethro's departure) where do we find it related that he returned after he had let him go and he had taken departure? And if you object that there (in the section in Numbers which Rashi has quoted as evidence that Jethro's departure took place in the second year) it does not mention Jethro at all but Hobab, and that the latter was not Jethro but the son of Jethro, then I reply that Hobab is identical with Jethro and not his son, because it is written, (Judges 4:11) "of the sons of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses".
וישב משה וגו׳ ויעמד העם MOSES SAT … AND THE PEOPLE STOOD He was sitting like a king and they all stood, and the thing was distasteful to Jethro in that he made light of the respect due to Israel. He therefore reproved him for this, as it is said (v. 14) "Why sittest thou only" — and they all stand! (Mekhilta)
מן הבקר עד הערב FROM MORNING UNTO EVENING — Is it really possible to say so — that Moses sat the whole day long? But the explanation is that any

judge who gives a rightful decision as truth demands it, even though he spends but one hour on it, Scripture accounts it to him as though he had occupied himself with the Torah the whole day long, and as though he became co-partner with the Holy One, blessed be He, in the work of the Creation of which it is stated, "It was evening and it was morning" (cf. Mekhilta; Shabbat 10a).

Verse 14

Verse 15

כי יבא — This is the same as כי בא because the people comes", the imperfect tense expressing continuous action.
לדרש אלהים TO ENQUIRE OF GOD — Understand this as the Targum does: למתבע אלפן, to seek instruction from the mouth of the Almighty.

Verse 16

כי יהיה להם דבר בא WHEN THEY HAVE A MATTER THEY COME (lit., "he comes") — "He", viz., who has the matter comes to me.

Verse 17

ויאמר חתן משה AND MOSES' FATHER-IN-LAW SAID — By way of honour Scripture describes him as the father-in-law of the king.

Verse 18

נבל תבל — Explain this as the Targum does: thou will certainly become weary. Its meaning expresses the idea of withering, old French flestre, just as. (Jeremiah 8:13) "and the leaf is withered (נבל)"; (Isaiah 34:4) "as withereth (כנבל) the leaf from off the vine" — the meaning being that it becomes shrivelled through the heat and through the frost, and so its strength diminishes and it becomes, as it were, weary, and falls from off the vine (מגפן).
גם אתה THOU ALSO — The word גם "also" was added in order to include Aaron and Hur and the seventy elders (cf. Mekhilta).
כי כבד ממך FOR [THIS THING] IS TOO HEAVY FOR THEE — its weight is far more than thy strength can bear.

Verse 19

אינעצך ויהי אלהים עמך I WILL GIVE THEE COUNSEL BUT LET GOD BE WITH THEE in considering this counsel. This is really what he said to him: Go and consult with the Almighty as regards the counsel I give you (Mekhilta).
היה אתה לעם מול האלהים BE THOU FOR THE PEOPLE TO GOD-WARD — be thou the agent and intermediary between them and the Omnipresent, and be thou the one who enquires of Him regarding the judgments.
את הדברים [AND THOU SHALT BRING] THE MATTERS — i. e. the matters of their strife.

Verse 20

Verse 21

ואתה תחזה MOREOVER THOU SHALT PROVIDE through the Holy Spirit that is upon thee (Mekhilta),
אנשי חיל MEN OF ABILITY (but חיל may mean "wealth" and in this sense the words would mean) — rich men who will not need to flatter or to show favour (cf. Mekhilta).
אנשי אמת MEN OF TRUTH — These are people commanding confidence (Mekhilta); who are deserving that one should rely upon their words — appoint these as judges because on account of this their words will be listened to.
שנאי בצע HATING LUCRE — men who hate (pay no regard to) their property when it is to be made the matter of a law-suit (Mekhilta), in accordance with what we say: Any judge from whom one has to wring the money he owes only by means of a law-suit is no fitting judge (Bava Batra 58b).
שרי אלפים OFFICERS OF THOUSANDS — there were six hundred such officers for the six hundred thousand men of Israel.
שרי מאות OFFICERS OF HUNDREDS — there were six thousand of them.
שרי חמשים OFFICERS OF FIFTIES — twelve thousand.
שרי עשרת OFFICERS OF TENS — sixty thousand (Mekhilta, Sanhedrin 18a).

Verse 22

ושפטו — Onkelos translates this by וידונון AND LET THEM JUDGE (not "and they judged", as in v. 26) — the word expresses a command.
והקל מעליך lit., AND TO LIGHTEN the burden FROM OFF YOU — this thing will serve to lighten it from off you. והקל — the grammatical form is similar to (Exodus 8:11) "and to harden (והכבד) his heart"; (2 Kings 3:24) "and to smite (והכות) Moab" — both of which words are infinitives expressing present time.

Verse 23

וצוך אלהים ויכלת עמד This implies: Consult the Almighty; if He commands thee to do this, thou wilt be able to stand, and if He prevents thee thou wilt be unable to stand (Mekhilta).
וגם כל העם הזה AND ALL THIS PEOPLE ALSO — Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and the seventy elders who are now associated with you (Mekhilta).

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

ושפטו — Onkelos translates by ודינין ית עמא "and they were judging the people" (cf. Rashi on v. 22).
יביאון — Onkelos translates this by מיתין (participle) "they were bringing" (or "they always brought").
יִשְׁפְּטוּ הֵם — This is the same as וְיִשְׁפְּטוּ; similar is (Ruth 2:8) לֹא תַעֲבוּרִי which is the same as לֹא תַעֲבָרִי. Its translation in the Targum is דינין אינון "they were judging". The above verses (i. e. the verbs in v. 22) express the command and consequently they are translated by וידונון and ידונון and ייתון, "and let them judge", and "let them bring", and "let them judge"; but these verses express the doing of what was commanded (they state that the command was actually carried out).

Verse 27

וילך לו אל ארצו AND HE WENT HIS WAY INTO HIS OWN LAND, for the purpose of making proselytes of the members of his family (Mekhilta).

Chapter 19

Verse 1

ביום הזה THE SAME (lit., this) DAY — on the day of the New Moon. (Mekhilta; Shabbat 86b). It ought not to write ביום הזה, but ביום ההוא, "on that day"; what, then, is the force of the words "on this day"? Since they refer to the day when the Israelites came to Sinai to receive the Torah they imply that the commands of the Torah should be to you each day as something new (not antiquated and something of which you have become tired), as though He had only given them to you for the first time on the day in question (Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 273; cf. Berakhot 63b).

Verse 2

ויסעו מרפידים AND THEY JOURNEYED FROM REPHIDIM — What does Scripture teach us by again expressly stating from where they set forth on the journey, for is it not already written (Exodus 17:1) that they had encamped at Rephidim and it is therefore evident that they set forth from there?! But Scripture repeats it in order to make a comparison with the character of their journey from Rephidim to that of their arrival in the wilderness of Sinai! How was it in the case of their arrival in the wilderness of Sinai? They were in a state of penitence (as shown by the unanimity with which they encamped before the mountain: cf. Rashi on the end of this verse)! Thus, too, their setting forth from Rephidim was in a state of repentance for the sin they had committed there (see Exodus 17:2) (Mekhilta).
ויחן שם ישראל AND THERE ISRAEL ENCAMPED as one man and with one mind — but all their other encampments were made in a murmuring spirit and in a spirit of dissension (Mekhilta).
נגד ההר BEFORE THE MOUNTAIN — i. e. at its east side (Mekhilta), for wherever you find the word נגד referring to a locality it signifies with the face towards the east of the place mentioned.

Verse 3

ומשה עלה AND MOSES WENT UP on the second day of the month (Mekhilta); for all his ascents to the mountain were made early in the morning, as it is stated (Exodus 34:4) "And Moses rose up early in the morning [and went up unto mount Sinai]" (Shabbat 86b).
כה תאמר THUS SHALT THOU SAY — Thus, i. e. in this (the Hebrew) language (cf. Mekhilta) and in this form of words.
לבית יעקב TO THE HOUSE OF JACOB — This denotes the women — to them you shall speak in gentle language (Mekhilta).
ותגיד לבני ישראל AND TELL THE CHILDREN (lit., the sons) OF ISRAEL — explain to the men the punishments and the details of the commandments in words that are as hard (distasteful) as wormwood (גידין) (cf. Shabbat 87a; Midrash לקח טוב).

Verse 4

אתם ראיתם YE HAVE SEEN — It is not a tradition in your possession, not in written words do I send a message to you, not by means of eye-witnesses do I attest this to you, but you yourselves have seen אשר עשיתי למצרים

WHAT I DID UNTO EGYPT — on account of many sins were they liable to Me for punishment before they came into contact which you, but I did not exact punishment from them except on your account (cf. Mekhilta).
ואשא אתכם AND I BARE YOU [ON EAGLES' WINGS] — This happened on that day when the Israelites came to Rameses (the place where they all assembled on the night when they left Egypt) (Mekhilta), because the Israelites were living dispersed throughout the whole district of Goshen and in one brief moment — when they came there to set out and to leave Egypt — they all gathered together at Rameses. Onkelos translates ואשא as though it were [אתכם] וְאַסְּיעַ — viz., ואטלית יתכון "and I made you travel" (cf. the Targum on וַיַּסַּע Exodus 15:22); he adapted the expression in a manner that is consonant with the respect due to the Most High God.
על כנפי נשרים UPON EAGLES' WINGS — as an eagle which bears its fledglings upon its wings. Scripture uses this metaphor because all other birds place their young between their feet since they are afraid of another bird that flies above them, but the eagle fears none except man — apprehending that perhaps he may cast an arrow at it — since no bird can fly above it; therefore he places it (its young) upon its wings, saying, "Better that the arrow should pierce me than my young!" (Mekhilta). — "I, too", said God, "did thus": (Exodus 14:19, 20) "And the angel of God … journeyed etc…. And he came between the camp of Egypt etc." … and the Egyptians were casting arrows and stone missiles and the cloud caught these (cf. Rashi on these verses).
ואבא אתכם אלי AND I BROUGHT YOU UNTO MYSELF — Explain this as the Targum does: "and I have brought you near to My service".

Verse 5

ועתה AND NOW — if you will now take upon yourselves the observance of My commandments, it will be pleasant (easy) to you from now and henceforth, for every beginning is difficult (Mekhilta).
ושמרתם את בריתי AND KEEP MY COVENANT which I shall make with you regarding the observance of the Torah (cf. (Mekhilta).
סגלה means a cherished treasure, the same as (Ecclesiastes 2:8) "and treasures (וסגלת) of kings" — costly vessels and precious stones which kings store up. In the same manner shall ye be unto Me a cherished treasure more than other peoples (Mekhilta). Now do not say that ye alone belong to Me and that I have no other peoples together with (besides) you, and what else, therefore, have I by which the special love I bear you can be made evident; this is not so,
כי לי כל הארץ FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE, but in My eyes and before Me they are as nought.

Verse 6

ואתם תהיו לי ממלכת כהנים AND YE SHALL BE UNTO ME A KINGDOM OF כהנים — i. e. princes, just as you say, (II Samuel 8:18) "And the sons of David were princes (כהנים)", which cannot denote priests since his sons were of the tribe of Judah and not of Levi, the priestly tribe.
אלה הדברים THESE ARE THE WORDS — these neither fewer nor more (Mekhilta).

Verse 7

Verse 8

וישב משה את דברי העם וגו׳ AND MOSES RETURNED THE WORDS OF THE PEOPLE [UNTO THE LORD] on the next day, which was the third of the month, for he never ascended the mountain to God except early in the morning (Shabbat

86a). But was it really necessary for Moses to deliver the reply to God; God is Omniscient! — But the explanation is that Scripture intends to teach you good manners from the example of Moses: for he did not say, "Since He who sent me knows the reply there is no need for me to report it" (Mekhilta).

Verse 9

בעב הענן signifies in the thickness of the cloud, and this is the ערפל, the thick darkness mentioned in Exodus 20:18 "And Moses stepped near unto the thick darkness where God was" (Mekhilta).
וגם בך AND IN THEE ALSO [WILL THEY BELIEVE] — The word "also" implies that they will believe also in the prophets who will come after thee (Mekhilta).
ויגד משה את דברי וגו׳ AND MOSES TOLD THE WORDS OF [THE PEOPLE UNTO THE LORD] on the following day which was the fourth of the month.
את דברי העם וגו׳ THE WORDS OF THE PEOPLE etc. — He said to God: "I have heard from them a reply to this statement — that their desire is to hear the commandments from You and not from me. One who hears from the mouth of a messenger is not the same (in the same position) as one who hears directly from the mouth of the King himself. It is our wish to see our King (cf. Mekhilta).

Verse 10

Adonoy said to Moshe. If that be so — that they make it necessary to speak to them [directly] — go to the people —
וקדשתם means AND THOU SHALT PREPARE THEM; i. e. tell them that they shall prepare themselves to-day and to-morrow (Mekhilta; cf. Onkelos).

Verse 11

והיו נכנים AND LET THEM BE PREPARED — separated from their wives (Mekhilta; cf. Rashi on Shabbat 87a).
ליום השלישי AGAINST THE THIRD DAY, which is the sixth of the month. On the fifth Moses built the altar under the mountain and the twelve monuments — the whole narrative as is stated later on in the Sidra ואלה המשפטים (Exodus 24:4), for there is neither "earlier" nor "later" (there is no chronological order) in the Torah (Mekhilta-2).
לעיני כל העם BEFORE THE EYES (in the sight) OF ALL THE PEOPLE — This tells us that there was not a blind person amongst them — that they had all been healed of their blindness (Mekhilta).

Verse 12

והגבלת AND THOU SHALT SET BOUNDS — set boundary marks for them as a sign that they should not approach the mountain from the boundary and beyond.
לאמר SAYING — The boundary says to them, "Take care not to ascend from here and further on" and you, too, admonish them regarding this.
ונגע בקצהו OR TOUCH THE EXTREMITY THEREOF — i. e. even the extremity thereof.

Verse 13

ירה יירה HE SHALL SURELY BE CAST DOWN — From this we derive the law regarding those who are sentenced to be stoned that they have to be thrown down from the place of stoning, which was a spot of the height of twice a man's stature (Sanhedrin 45a).
יירה means HE SHALL BE THROWN BELOW to the ground, the word being similar to, (Exodus 15:4) "He hath cast down (ירה) into the sea".

במשך היבל WHEN THE RAM'S HORN SOUNDETH LONG — when the ram's horn draws out a long sound that is a sign of the departure of the Shechina and that the Divine voice is about to cease, and as soon as "I" shall depart they shall be permitted to ascend [i. e. המה יעלו בהר is not obligatory, signifying, "they shall go up", but it is permissive] (Mekhilta).
היבל — This denotes a ram's horn, for so do they term, a ram in Arabia — יובלא (corresponding to the Hebrew יובל) (Rosh Hashanah 26a). The horn used here was that of Isaac's ram (Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 31).

Verse 14

מן ההר אל העם [AND MOSES WENT DOWN] FROM THE MOUNTAIN UNTO THE PEOPLE — This tells us that Moses did not betake himself first to his personal concerns but went direct from the mountain to the people (Mekhilta).

Verse 15

היו נכנים לשלשת ימים means be ready by the end of three days, that is, by the fourth day — for Moses added a day of his own accord to the time appointed by God. This is the opinion of Rabbi José. But according to the opinion of him who says that the Ten Commandments were given on the sixth of the month Moses did not add anything, and the words לשלשת ימים do not signify after three days but mean the same as ליום השלישי (v. 11), i. e. by three days (cf. Shabbat 86b-87a).
אל תגשו אל אשה DO NOT GO NEAR A WOMAN during the whole of these three days, this was in order that the women may immerse themselves on the third day and be pure to receive the Torah. If they have relations within the three days, the woman could [involuntarily] expel semen after her immersion and become unclean again. After three days have elapsed, however, the semen has already become putrid and is no longer capable of fertilization, so it is pure from contaminating the woman who expels it. (cf. Shabbat 86a)

Verse 16

בהיות הבקר lit., WHEN IT WAS BEING MORNING — This phrase tells us that He was there before them at the place of the Divine Revelation, something which it is not customary for human beings to do — that the teacher should await the arrival of his disciple. A similar instance we find in Scripture (Ezekiel 3:22, 23): "[God said unto me]. Arise, go forth into the plain, [and I will there speak with thee]. Then I arose, and went forth into the plain; and, behold the glory of the Lord stood there already" (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 15; cf. Nedarim 8a).

Verse 17

לקראת האלהים [AND MOSES BROUGHT FORTH THE PEOPLE …] TO MEET GOD — This (the word לקראת, "to meet", which is used when two persons are approaching one another) tells us that the Shechina was going forth to meet them, as a bridegroom who goes forth to meet his bride. This is what Scripture means when it says, (Deuteronomy 33:2) "The Lord came from Sinai", and it is not said, "[The Lord came to Sinai" (Mekhilta).
בתחתית ההר AT THE NETHER PART OF THE MOUNTAIN — According to its literal meaning this signifies "at the foot of the mountain". But a Midrashic explanation is, that the mountain was plucked up from its place and was arched over them as a cask, so that they were standing בתחתית beneath (under) the mountain itself (Mekhilta; Shabbat 88a).

Verse 18

עשן כלו WAS ALTOGETHER ON A SMOKE — This word עָשַׁן is not a noun, because the ש is punctuated with Patach, but it has the meaning of "it was doing something", similar to and אָמַר and שָׂמַע and שָׁמַע. On this account, its translation in the Targum is תָּנֵן כֻּלֵּהּ "it was altogether giving forth smoke" (תָּנֵן is a verb corresponding with the Hebrew עָשַׁן). and it does not translate it by תְּנָנָא (a noun denoting smoke, corresponding to Hebrew עָשָׁן). But wherever else the word עשן occurs in Scripture it is punctuated with Kametz because it is a noun.
הכבשן A FURNACE of lime (i. e. in which lime is burnt and which emits vast quantities of smoke). One might think that the mountain emitted smoke only like such a furnace and not to a greater degree! Scripture therefore states in another passage, (Deuteronomy 4:11) "[And the mountain] burned with fire unto the very midst of the heavens". Then what reason is there for stating that it smoked only like a furnace? This is said in order to make intelligible to the human ear as much as it can understand: Scripture gives human beings an example (a comparison) which is well-known to them. A similar case is, (Hosea 11:10) "As a lion does He (God) roar". But who gave the lion power if not He, and yet Scripture compares him only to a lion! But the reason is that we describe Him by comparing Him to His creatures in order to make intelligible to the human ear as much as it can understand. A similar example is: (Ezekiel 43:2) "And His voice was like the sound of many waters". But who gave the waters a thunderous sound except He, and yet you describe Him by comparing Him to His handiwork — it is to make it intelligible to the human ear (Mekhilta).

Verse 19

הולך וחזק מאד WAXED LOUDER AND LOUDER — The manner of an ordinary person is that the longer he continues to blow a trumpet the sound he produces becomes weaker and fainter; but in this instance it went on getting stronger. And why was it thus (i. e. not so loud) at first? To make their ears receptive to as much as they were able to hear (Mekhilta).
משה ידבר MOSES SPAKE — When Moses was speaking and proclaiming the Commandments to Israel — for they heard from the Almighty's mouth only the Commandments אנכי and לא יהיה לך, whilst the others were promulgated by Moses — then the Holy One, blessed be He, assisted him by giving him strength so that his voice might be powerful and so become audible (Mekhilta).
יענו בקול signifies He answered him in respect to (ב) the voice, just as (1 Kings 18:24) "He that answereth באש" — "in respect to the fire" — i. e. by causing fire to descend. (So here: God answered Moses' petition that his voice might become audible to the vast concourse of people).

Verse 20

וירד ה׳ על הר סיני AND THE LORD CAME DOWN UPON MOUNT SINAI — One might think, then, that He actually came down upon it! Therefore it states, (Exodus 20:19) "Ye have seen that I have spoken to you from heaven". These two texts together teach us that He bent down the upper and lower heavens and spread them out over the top of the mountain like a bed-spread over a bed and the throne of Glory descended upon it (Mekhilta).

Verse 21

העד בעם signifies, WARN THEM not to ascend the mountain.
פן יהרסו lit., LEST THEY BREAK DOWN — warn them that they shall not break down their post because that their longing is אל ה׳ TO THE LORD לראות TO SEE Him and they therefore would approach nearer towards the mountain,

ונפל ממנו רב AND MANY OF THEM FALL — whatever of them it may be that falls, even though it be a single person only, will be regarded by Me as רב, many (cf. Mekhilta).
פן יהרסו — The term הרס, "breaking down", always denotes the separation of the collection of parts that constitute the edifice. Similarly those who depart from the position which people have taken up break down that position.

Verse 22

וגם הכהנים AND THE PRIESTS ALSO — the first born sons also, through whom the sacrificial service was carried out (Zevachim 115b),
הנגשים אל ה' WHO MAY DRAW NIGH UNTO THE LORD to offer sacrifices — let them also not rely upon their rank and ascend the mountain, but
יתקדשו LET THEM BE PREPARED to remain at their post,
פן יפרץ LEST [THE LORD] BURST FORTH — The word פרץ is of the same root and meaning as פרצה "a breach"; the sense is: He may slay some of them and thus cause a breach in their ranks.

Verse 23

לא יוכל העם THE PEOPLE CANNOT [COME UP TO MOUNT SINAI] — There is no need for me to warn them, for they have been standing under such a warning these three days, and they cannot go up for they have no permission so to do.

Verse 24

לך רד GO, GO DOWN and warn them a second time. God said this, because the rule is that one admonishes a person before an action is to be done and then one again admonishes him at the very moment when the action is to be done (cf. (Mekhilta).
ועלית אתה ואהרן עמך והכהנים AND THOU SHALT COME UP, THOU AND AARON WITH THEE AND THE PRIESTS — One might think that they (the priests) shall also be with thee! Therefore it states "and thou shalt come up". Consequently you must now admit that this is what God spake to him: thou hast a designated place for thyself, and Aaron a designated place for himself and they a designated place for themselves — Moses approached closer than Aaron and Aaron closer than the priests — but let the people under no circumstances break down their position to go up to the Lord (Mekhilta).
פן יפרץ בם LEST HE BURST FORTH UPON THEM — Although it (the word יִפָרֶץ) is punctuated with a Chataf Kametz (our Kamets Chataf — short Kametz), it has not departed from its normal grammatical form, for thus is the way of every word which has the vowel Melopum (our חולם) in its hit syllable, that being a closed syllable: when it comes with a Makkef (a hyphen) after it the vowelling is changed to a Chataf Kametz (our short Kametz).

Verse 25

ויאמר אליהם AND HE SPOKE UNTO THEM this warning.

Chapter 20

Verse 1

וידבר אלהים AND GOD SPAKE — The word אלהים is a term for a judge. Since there are chapters in the Torah of such a character that if a person observes the commands contained therein he will receive a reward and if

he never observes them at all) he will not receive punishment on their account, one might think that the Ten Commandments are also of such a character (that no punishment will follow upon the infringement of them); therefore Scripture expressly states, "God spake" — God Who is Judge, exacting punishment (Mekhilta).
את כל הדברים האלה ALL THESE WORDS — This statement (that God spake all these words) tells us that the Holy One, blessed be He, said all these words in one utterance, something that is impossible to a human being to do — to speak in this manner. Now if this be so, why does Scripture again say the first two Commandments, אנכי and לא יהיה לך? But the explanation is that He repeated and expressly uttered each of these two commandments by itself (Mekhilta).
לאמר lit., TO SAY — This expression teaches us that they answered to that which required the reply "Yea" (אנכי) by "Yea" and to that which required the reply "Nay" (לא יהיה) by "Nay" (Mekhilta).

Verse 2

אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים WHO HAVE BROUGHT THEE OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT — That act of bringing you out is alone of sufficient importance that you should subject yourselves to Me. Another explanation: because He had revealed Himself to them at the Red Sea as a mighty man of war and here He revealed Himself as a grey-beard filled with compassion, as it is stated in connection with the Giving of the Law, (Exodus 24:10) "and there was under His feet as it were a brick-work of sapphire", which is explained to mean that this (the brick-work) was before Him at the time of their bondage; "and there was as the essence of heaven" (i. e. joy and gladness) when they had been delivered (cf. Rashi on Exodus 24:10), thus the Divine Glory changed according to circumstances, — therefore He stated here: Since I change, appearing in various forms, do not say, "There are two divine Beings"; it is I Who brought you forth from Egypt and Who appeared to you at the Sea (cf. Mekhilta). Another explanation: because they then heard many voices, as it is said (v. 15) "the people heard the voices (הקלות)" — voices coming from the four cardinal points and from the heavens and from the earth — therefore God said to them, "Do not say there are many Deities". — Why did God say in the singular אלהיך, "Thy God", (as though speaking to one person alone)? To afford Moses an opportunity to speak in defence of Israel at the incident of the golden calf. This, is exactly what he did say, (Exodus 32:11) "Wherefore, O Lord, doth Thy wrath glow against Thy people", for not to them didst Thou give the command, "There shall be to thee no other gods" but to me alone! (Exodus Rabbah 43:5)
מבית עבדים OUT OF THE HOUSE OF SLAVES — This means, from the house of Pharaoh where ye were slaves to him. Or perhaps it only says "from the house of slaves" in the sense of a house belonging to slaves to that the words imply that they were slaves to slaves (a most abject form of slavery)! But elsewhere it states, (Deuteronomy 7:8) "He redeemed thee from the house of slaves, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt", so that you must now admit that they were slaves of the king and not slaves to slaves and the meaning is: from the house where you were slaves (Mekhilta).

Verse 3

לא יהיה לך THERE SHALL NOT BE UNTO THEE [OTHER GODS] — Why is this said? Does not the preceding verse state: I — and no other — shall be thy God? But since it states immediately after this, "Thou shalt not make unto thee [any graven image etc.]" I might say that I have only a prohibition that one may not make such gods; whence could I know that one may not retain an idol that has already been made? Perhaps there is no such law!

Therefore it states here: “there shall not be unto thee” (thou shalt not have other gods) (Mekhilta.)
אלהים אחרים OTHER GODS — which are not gods, but others have made them gods over themselves. It would not be correct to explain this to mean “gods other than Me”, for it would be blasphemy of the Most High God to term them gods together with Him (cf. Mekhilta). Another explanation of אלהים אחרים : they are so called because they are other (i. e. strange) to those who worship them; these cry to them but they do not answer them, and it is just as though it (the god) is another (a stranger) to him (to the worshipper), one who has never known him at all (Mekhilta).
על פני BEFORE ME — i. e. so long as I exist; and these apparently superfluous words are added in order that you may not say that no one received any command against idolatry except that generation which went forth from Egypt (Mekhilta).

Verse 4

פסל A GRAVEN IMAGE — it is so called because it is chiselled out (the root פסל has this meaning).
וכל תמונה lit., OR ANY LIKENESS i. e. the likeness of any thing אשר בשמים THAT IS IN THE HEAVENS.

Verse 5

אל קנא A JEALOUS GOD — He is jealous to exact punishment, and does not pass over His rights by pardoning idolatry (Mekhilta). Wherever: the expression קנא occurs it signifies in old French emportement, English zeal, — determining to exact punishment.
לשנאי OF THEM THAT HATE ME — This must be explained in the same sense as the Targum takes it: when they retain in their hands (follow the example of) the evil doings of their ancestors (Sanhedrin 27b);

Verse 6

and He keeps (stores up) the mercy which a person does to give a reward for it to the thousand generations of that person’s descendants. It follows, therefore, that the measure of good (reward) is greater than the measure of punishment in the proportion of one to five hundred, for the former is threatened only to four generations whilst the latter is bestowed upon thousands (two thousands at least) (Tosefta Sotah 4:1; see Rashi on Exodus 34:7).

Verse 7

לשוא IN VAIN — for no valid reason, idly. What is a שבועת שוא, an oath taken for no valid reason? If one takes an oath declaring something, the nature of which is evident, to be different from what it is: e. g., swearing about a stone pillar that it is of gold (Shevuot 29a).

Verse 8

זכור — This word REMEMBER which opens this commandment here and שמור “observe” which opens it in Deuteronomy (5:12) were spoken in one utterance. Similar is, (Exodus 31:14) “Everyone that profaneth it (the Sabbath) shall surely be put to death”, which apparently is in contradiction with (Numbers 28:9) “And on the Sabbath day [ye shall offer] two lambs”, a command necessitating actions which, if done for any other purposes on the Sabbath, would involve a profanation of that day. Similar is, (Deuteronomy 22:11) “Thou shalt not wear a garment of two kinds, [as of woollen and linen together]” and (Deuteronomy 22:12) “Thou

shalt make thee tassels", for the performance of which command wool and linen may be employed in combination. Similar is, (Leviticus 18:16) "The nakedness of thy brother's wife" (the prohibition of marriage with her), and (Deuteronomy 25:5) "her husband's brother shall come unto her" (he shall marry her). — This is the meaning of what is said (Psalms 62:12) "One thing did God speak, these two things did we hear" (Mekhilta). זכור — This word expresses the verbal action without any reference to a particular time (the infinitive), similar to, (Isaiah 22:13) אכול ושתו "to eat and to drink"; (II Samuel 3:16) הלוך ובכה "to go and to weep"; and the following is its meaning: take care to remember always the Sabbath day — that if, for example, you come across a nice article of food during the week, put it by for the Sabbath (Beitzah 16a).

Verse 9

ועשית כל מלאכתך [SIX DAYS SHALT THOU LABOUR] AND DO ALL THY WORK — When the Sabbath comes it should be in thy eyes as though all thy work were done (completed), so that thou shouldst not think at all about work (Mekhilta).

Verse 10

אתה ובנך ובתך THOU AND THY SON AND THY DAUGHTER — these latter mean the young children. Or perhaps this is not so, but it means your adult children? But you must admit that these have already been placed under this prohibition (by the word "Thou", because the performance of this command is obligatory upon all adults to whom it was addressed). Therefore these words must be intended only to admonish the adults (implied in the term "Thou") about the Sabbath rest of their young children (to impose upon the parents the obligation of enforcing the Sabbath rest upon them) (Mekhilta). This is the meaning of what we have learnt in a Mishna, (Shabbat 16:6) "A minor who is about to extinguish a fire — we do not listen to him (do not permit him to do this), because his observance of the Sabbath is a duty imposed upon you".

Verse 11

וינח ביום השביעי AND HE RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY — If one may say so, He recorded rest about Himself (recorded that He rested) to teach from this an inference à fortiori as regards a human being whose work is performed only by labour and toil — that he should rest on the Sabbath day (Mekhilta).
ברך…ויקדשהו HE BLESSED … AND SANCTIFIED IT — He blessed it through the Manna by giving a double portion on the sixth day — "double bread"; and He sanctified it through the Manna in that on it none fell (Mekhilta; cf. Rashi on Genesis 2:3).

Verse 12

למען יארכון ימיך THAT THY DAYS MAY BE LONG — If thou honourest them they will be long, and if not, they will be shortened — for the words of the Torah may be explained as concise statements: from what is included in a positive statement we may infer the negative and from what is included in a negative statement we may infer the positive (Mekhilta).

Verse 13

לא תנאף THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY — The term ניאוף, "adultery", is technically only applicable to the case of a married woman, as it is said, (Leviticus 20:10) […the wife of his neighbour], the נואף and the

נואפת shall surely be put to death", and it further states, (Ezekiel 16:32) "The woman that comitteth adultery, that taketh strangers instead of her husband".
לא תגנוב THOU SHALT NOT STEAL — Scripture here is speaking about a case of one who steals human beings, whilst the command (Leviticus 19:11) "Ye shall not steal" speaks about a case of one who steals money (another person's property in general). Or perhaps this is not so, but this speaks about the case of one who money and the other about the case of one who steals human beings! You must, however, admit that the rule applies: a statement must be explained from its context. How is it in regard to, "Thou shalt not murder" and "Thou shalt not commit adultery"? Each, speaks of a matter for which one becomes liable to death by sentence of the court; similarly, "Thou shalt not steal", must speak of a matter for which one becomes liable to death by sentence of the court, and this is not so in the case of theft of money but only in that of kidnapping (Sanhedrin 86a; cf.Mekhilta).

Verse 14

Verse 15

וכל העם ראים AND ALL THE PEOPLE SAW — This statement teaches us that there was not a blind person amongst them. And whence may we learn that there was not a dumb person amongst them? Because it states (Exodus 19:8) "And all the people answered". And whence may we learn that there was not a deaf person amongst them? Because it states (Exodus 24:7) "We will do and we will hear" (Mekhilta).
ראים את הקולת [THEY] SAW THE SOUNDS — they saw that which should be heard (Mekhilta) — something which is impossible to see on any other occasion.
את הקולת THE SOUNDS which issued from the mouth of the Almighty.
וינעו THEY MOVED — The root נוע denotes trembling (Mekhilta).
וימדו מרחק AND THEY STOOD AFAR OFF — they moved back startled twelve miles, a distance equal to the length of their camp, and ministering angels came and assisted them — to bring them back, as it is said, (Psalms 68:13) "The angels of the God of Hosts made them move on, move on" (Shabbat 88b).

Verse 16

Verse 17

לבעבור נסות אתכם signifies, in order to exalt you in the world (Mekhilta) — that you may obtain a great name amongst the nations because He has revealed Himself to you in His Glory.
נסות has the sense of exalting and greatness, of similar meaning and root to, (Isaiah 62:10) "Lift up an ensign (נס)"; (Isaiah 49:22) "I will lift up my standard (נסי)"; (Isaiah 30:17) "as an ensign (כנס) on a hill" — and an ensign is called נס because it is something raised on high.
ובעבור תהיה יראתו AND THAT HIS FEAR MAY BE [BEFORE YOUR FACES] — Through the fact that you see that He is feared and dreaded you will know that there is none beside Him and you will therefore fear Him and not sin.

Verse 18

נגש אל הערפל [AND MOSES] STEPPED NEAR TO THE THICK CLOUD — within the three divisions — darkness, cloud and thick cloud (Mekhilta), as it is

said, (Deuteronomy 4:11) "And the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of the heaven, with darkness, clouds and dark clouds". The ערפל is the עב הענן of which God spoke to him when He said, (19:9) "Behold I come unto thee in a thick cloud (עב הענן)" (cf. Rashi on that verse).

Verse 19

כה תאמר THUS THOU SHALT SAY — in this (the Holy) language (Mekhilta).
אתם ראיתם YE HAVE SEEN — There is a difference between what a person himself sees and what others relate to him, for what others relate to him sometimes his heart is divided in its opinion so that he does not believe (Mekhilta).
כי מן השמים דברתי THAT I HAVE SPOKEN [TO YOU] FROM HEAVEN — But another verse states, (Exodus 19:20) "And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai", and thus the two verses appear to be contradictory! There now comes a third verse and harmonises them: (Deuteronomy 4:36) "Out of heaven He made thee hear His voice that He might instruct thee; and upon the earth He showed thee His great fire" — His glory was in the heavens but His fire and His power were upon the earth. Another explanation: He bent down the heavens and the heavens of heavens, and spread them out upon the mountain; similarly it states, (Psalms 18:10) "He bowed the heavens and came down" (Mekhilta).

Verse 20

לא תעשון אתי YE SHALL NOT MAKE WITH ME — Ye shall not make an image of My ministers that minister before Me in the heights (Mekhilta).
אלהי כסף GODS OF SILVER — This statement is intended to lay down a prohibition regarding the Cherubim which you will make to stand with Me — that they shall not be made of silver, for if you make any alteration in them by making them of silver and not of gold they will be before me (regarded by Me) as idols.
ואלהי זהב AND GODS OF GOLD — This statement is intended to lay down a prohibition that one may not add to the number of two Cherubim which are prescribed: for if you make four they will be regarded by Me as gods of gold (Mekhilta).
לא תעשו לכם YE SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELVES — Ye shall not say: Behold I will make Cherubim in the Synagogues and the Houses of Study of the same kind as I make in the House of Eternity (a term for the Temple at Jerusalem); on this account it states: "ye shall not make for yourselves" (Mekhilta).

Verse 21

מזבח אדמה AN ALTAR OF EARTH [SHALT THOU MAKE] — i. e. an altar attached to the earth, meaning, that they should not build an altar upon columnes or upon a base but it must rest upon the actual ground. Another explanation is, that one should fill the hollow interior of the copper altar (Exodus 27:8) with earth at the time when they encamp, and then erect it for the purpose of sacrifice (Mekhilta).
תעשה לי THOU SHALT MAKE FOR ME — this implies that from its very beginning it shall be made for My Name (i. e. for the service of Me).
וזבחת עליו AND THOU SHALT SACRIFICE (slaughter) עליו — i. e. near it, in the same sense as, (Numbers 2:20) "and by him (ועליו) the tribe of Manasseh". Or perhaps this is not the meaning, but it means "[thou shalt slaughter] upon it", in its literal sense? This cannot be so, because it states, (Deuteronomy 12:27) "[And thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings] as regards the flesh and the blood upon the altar of the Lord thy God", but the slaughtering shall not be on the top of the altar (Mekhilta).

את עלתיך ואת שלמיך THY BURNT OFFERINGS AND THY FEAST OFFERINGS which are from (belong to) thy flocks and thy herds. [את צאנך ואת בקרך are thus a further explanation of the words את עלתיך ואת שלמיך].
בכל המקום אשר אזכיר את שמי IN ALL PLACES WHERE I MENTION MY NAME — This means: where I will give you permission to mention My Proper Name, there אבא אליך וברכתיך I WILL COME TO THEE AND I WILL BLESS THEE — I will make My Shechina rest upon thee. From this you may learn that He did not give any permission to mention (pronounce) His Proper Name except in the place where the Shechina would come — and this is the Chosen House (another term for the Temple at Jerusalem). He gave permission to the priests to pronounce His Proper Name there whilst lifting up their hands to bless the people (cf. Mekhilta; Sotah 38a; and Rashi on Numbers 6:27).

Verse 22

ואם מזבח אבנים AND IF (according to Rashi, AND WHEN) [THOU WILT MAKE ME] AN ALTAR OF STONES — Rabbi Ishmael said: Every time the word אם it used in the Torah it refer to some action the doing of which is optional, except in three instances. Here: ואם מזבח אבנים תעשה לי — you see that this אם is used in the sense of כאשר, "when", the meaning being: "And when thou makest me an altar of stone, לא תבנה אתהן גזית THOU SHALT NOT BUILD IT OF HEWN STONE, for, as a matter of fact, it is obligatory upon thee to build an altar of stone, as it is said, (Deuteronomy 27:6) "of whole stones thou shalt build [the altar of the Lord thy God]". Similarly, (Exodus 22:24) אם כסף תלוה את עמי is obligatory and signifies: "when (אם) thou lendest My people money", and not, "if thou lendest", because it is said, (Deuteronomy 15:8) "And thou shalt surely lend him"; consequently this אם also is used in the sense of כאשר "when". Similarly, (Leviticus 2:14) ואם תקריב מנחת בכורים, for this refers to the meal-offering of the Omer which is obligatory and therefore the trantlation is, "And when (ואם) thou offerest the meal-offering of first-fruits", and not, "if thou offerest". You must therefore admit that these instances of אם are not conditional, meaning "if", but they are absolute, and that they are used in the sense of כאשר, "when" (Mekhilta; Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 306; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 2:14).
גזית — This has the meaning of cutting (גזירה), the stones being thus called because one hews them and cuts them with an iron tool (Mekhilta).
כי חרבך הנפת עליה — This word כי is used here in the sense of פן, which signifies "perhaps it may be" (and it does not mean "because") — "perhaps it may happen that thou liftest up thy iron tool above it".
ותחללה THEN THOU HAST PROFANED IT — Thus you may learn that if thou liftest up thy iron tool above it thou profanest it. The reason of this is, because the altar is created (its purpose is) to lengthen man's days and iron has been created (one of its purposes is) to shorten man's days, it is not right that an object which shortens man's life should be lifted up above that which lengthens it (Mekhilta, Middoth 3:4). And a further reason is: because the altar makes peace between Israel and their Father in Heaven, and therefore there should not come upon it anything that cuts and destroys. Now, the following statement follows logically, à fortiori: How is it in the case of stones which cannot see nor hear nor speak? Because that they promote peace Scripture ordains, "Thou shalt not lift up against them any iron tool!" Then in the case of one who makes peace between a man and his wife, between family and family, between a man and his fellow, how much more certain is it that punishment will not come upon him (Mekhilta).

Verse 23

ולא תעלה במעלות AND THOU SHALT NOT GO UP BY STEPS [TO MY ALTAR] — When thou buildest an ascent to the altar thou shalt not construct it of

steps, échelons in old French, but it shall be even (i. e. the surface shall be unbroken) and sloping (cf. Rashi on Exodus 27:5).
אשר לא תגלה ערותך THAT THY NAKEDNESS BE NOT UNCOVERED — because on account of these steps you will have to take large paces and so spread the legs. Now, although this would not be an actual uncovering of one's nakedness (of the parts usually kept covered), since it is written, (Exodus 28:42) "And thou shalt make for them (the priests) linen breeches [to cover the flesh of their nakedness]", still the taking of large paces is near enough to uncovering one's nakedness that it may be described as such, and you would then be treating them (the stones of the altar) in a manner that implies disrespect. Now the following statement follows logically à fortiori: How is it in the case of stones which have no sense (feeling) to be particular about any disrespect shown to them? Scripture ordains that since they serve some useful purpose you should not treat them in a manner that implies disrespect! Then in the case of your fellow-man who is made in the image of your Creator and who is particular about any disrespect shown to him, how much more certain is it that you should not treat him disrespectfully! (Mekhilta)

Chapter 21

Verse 1

ואלה המשפטים NOW THESE ARE THE JUDGMENTS — Wherever אלה, "these are", is used it cuts off (פוסל) the preceding section from that which it introduces; where, however, ואלה "and these" is used it adds something to the former subject (i. e. forms a continuation of it). So also here: "And these are the judgments (i. e. these, also)": What is the case with the former commandments (the עשרת הדברות)? They were given at Sinai! So these, too, were given at Sinai! (Mekhilta; Shemot Rabbah 30:3; cf. also Midrash Tanchuma, Mishpatim 3) If this be so, why is this section dealing with the "civil laws" placed immediately after that commanding the making of the altar? To tell you that you should seat (i. e. provide quarters for) the Sanhedrin in the vicinity of the Temple.
אשר תשים לפניהם WHICH THOU SHALT PUT BEFORE THEM — God said to Moses: It should not enter your mind to say, "I shall teach them a section of the Torah or a single Halacha twice or three times until it will become current in their mouths exactly according to its wording (i. e. until they know the text verbatim), but I shall not take the trouble to make them understand the reason of each thing and its significance"; therefore Scripture says, אשר תשים לפניהם, "which thou shalt set before them" (cf. Genesis 34:23) — like a table fully laid before a person with everything ready for eating (Mekhilta).
לפניהם BEFORE THEM — but not before the heathens. Even if you know that in the case of a particular matter of law they will decide it in the same way as Jewish law would, do not bring it before their courts; for he who brings Israel's law-cases before the heathens defames the Name of the Lord and pays honour to the name of the idol (in the name of which the heathen court administers justice), thereby giving it undue importance, as it is said, (Deuteronomy 32:31) "For their rock is not as our Rock that our enemies should be judges over us", which implies: when our enemies are judges over us (i. e. if we make them judges over us) it is a testimony to the superiority of that which they reverence (their idol) (Midrash Tanchuma, Mishpatim 3).

Verse 2

כי תקנה עבד עברי IF THOU BUYEST AN עבד עברי — This means a servant who is a Hebrew. Or perhaps this is not so, but it means a servant of a Hebrew (one who had been the servant of a Hebrew), i. e. a Canaanitish servant whom thou hast bought from an Israelite, and it is with regard to him that Scripture states "six years he shall serve"! — And if you ask, how I will then explain the commandment, (Leviticus 25:46) "and you shall leave them (the Canaanitish servants) as an inheritance for your children [and they shall serve you forever]"? then I reply, that this refers to the case of a Canaanitish servant who has been bought from a heathen; but if such a servant has been bought from an Israelite he shall go free at the end of six years! — This explanation that our text refers to a Canaanite servant will not hold, for Scripture states, (Deuteronomy 15:12) "and if thy brother an Hebrew man be sold unto thee [and serve thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee]" — the Torah says, as it were, by using the two terms העברי and אחיך: I tell you this (that the servant shall go free in the seventh year) only with regard to thy brother! Consequently Leviticus 25:46 has to be applied to any Canaanite servant, whether bought from a Hebrew or from a heathen and עבד עברי in our text can only denote עבד שהוא עברי. (Mekhilta)
כי תקנה IF THOU BUYEST [AN HEBREW SERVANT] — This means an Hebrew servant whom thou hast bought from the hand of the court which sold him for a theft which he had committed, as it is said, (Exodus 22:2) "if he (the thief) have nothing, then shall he be sold for his theft". Or perhaps this is not so, but Scripture is referring to the case of one who sells himself as a servant on account of his destitution, whilst he who has been sold by the court for his theft shall not go free at the end of six years! This assumption it erroneous, for when Scripture states, (Leviticus 25:39, 40) "and if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and he sells himself unto thee … [he shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee]", it is plain that in this passage there is mentioned the case of one who sells himself on account of his destitution. How then must I explain כי תקנה in this verse? Obviously as referring to him who was sold by the court (Mekhilta).
לחפשי means INTO FREEDOM (i. e. חפשי is a noun like שֶׁפֶשׁ but having a redundant י at the end).

Verse 3

אם בגפו יבא IF HE CAME IN BY HIMSELF — This means that he was unmarried — as the Targum renders it אם בלחודוהי, if he came in "alone". The term בגפו is the same as בכנפו (גף being synonymous with כנף wing, skirt) i. e. he came in only just as he was, alone, merely wrapped in his garment: so that בגפו, "in his skirt", means "in the skirt of his garment".
בגפו יצא HE SHALL GO OUT BY HIMSELF — This intimates that if he was unmarried originally (when he came in), his master is not allowed to give him against his will a Canaanitish handmaid with the object of raising slaves (Kiddushin 20a).
אם בעל אשה הוא IF HE BE MARRIED to an Israelite woman (Mekhilta), ויצאה אשתו עמו then HIS WIFE SHALL GO OUT WITH HIM — But who brought her in (into the state of service) that the text has to state she shall go out? But by saying this Scripture intimates that he who acquires a Hebrew servant is bound to provide his wife and children also with food (Mekhilta; Kiddushin 22a).

Verse 4

אם אדניו יתן לו אשה IF HIS LORD HAS GIVEN HIM A WIFE — From this we learn that if he has already an Israelite wife the master has the right to give him a Canaanitish handmaid with the object of raising slaves. Or perhaps this is not so, but Scripture by אשה is speaking about an Israelite

woman?! Scripture, however, states: "the wife and her children shall be the master's", consequently the text can only be speaking of a Canaanitish woman, for a Hebrew maidservant goes free at the end of six years just as a Hebrew man-servant does — yea, even before the termination of six years she goes free if she shows symptoms of incipient puberty (cf. Rashi v. 7) — for it is said, (Deuteronomy 15:12) "[and if] thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, [be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee]", which statement teaches you that a Hebrew woman also goes free after six years' service (Mekhilta; Kiddushin 14b).

Verse 5

את אשתי MY WIFE — the Canaanitish handmaid mentioned above.

Verse 6

אל האלהים means to the court. He (the slave) should take counsel with his vendors (the court) because it was they who sold him to him (the master) (Mekhilta).
אל הדלת או אל המזוזה TO THE DOOR OR TO THE DOORPOST — From this statement you might think that the doorpost is also a proper thing upon which the servant's ear may be pierced! Scripture, however, states, (Deuteronomy 15:17) "[Then thou shalt take an awl], and thrust it through his ear and into the door" — into the door but not into the doorpost. If this be so, what is the purpose of Scripture stating here "[to the door] or to the doorpost"? By this juxtaposition it only compares the door with the doorpost. What is the characteristic of the doorpost? It is something perpendicular! So, too, the door must during the act of performation be in a perpendicular position (on its hinges), not detached as, for instance, lying on the ground (Mekhilta; Kiddushin 22b).
ורצע אדניו את אזנו במרצע AND HIS LORD SHALL BORE HIS EAR THROUGH WITH THE AWL — "His ear" means his right ear. Or perhaps this is not so, but Scripture means his left ear? Scripture however uses the term אזן here and it uses אזן in another passage, thereby suggesting an analogy based upon verbal similarity; viz., here it is said "and his lord shall bore his ear (אזנו) through", and of the leper it is said, (Leviticus 14:25) "and the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear (אזנו הימית) of him that is to be cleansed". — How is it in that latter passage? It is the right ear! So here, too, it is the right ear. — What is the reason that the ear had to be pierced rather than any other limb of the servant's body? Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai said: That ear which heard on Mount Sinai, (Exodus 20:13) "Thou shalt not steal" and yet its owner went and stole and was therefore sold as a slave — let it be pierced! Or, in the case of him who sold himself from destitution, having committed no theft, the reason is: That ear which heard on Mount Sinai what I said, (Leviticus 25:55) "For unto Me the children Israel are servants" and yet its owner went and procured for himself another master — let it be pierced! (Mekhilta; Kiddushin 22b). Rabbi Simeon interpreted this verse like a jewel (i. e. giving it an ethical signification): In what respect are door and doorpost different from all other objects in the house that they should be singled out for this purpose? God, in effect, said: door and doorpost that were eye-witnesses in Egypt when I passed over the lintel and the two doorposts, freeing Israel from slavery, and when I said, (Leviticus 25:55) "For unto Me the children of Israel are servants" — servants to Me but not servants of servants (of human beings), and yet this man went and procured another master for himself — let him be pieced in their presence (i. e. let them be eye-witnesses now when this man voluntarily prolongs his state of slavery)! (Kiddushin 22b.)

ועבדו לעלם AND HE SHALL SERVE HIM FOR EVER — This means until the Jubilee. Or, perhaps this is not so, but לעולם means for ever as is its usual meaning? Scripture however, states, (Leviticus 25:10) "[And ye shall sanctify the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof] and ye shall return every man unto his family". A comparison of these two passages tells us that a period of fifty years is termed עולם. This does not, however, imply that he has to serve him a whole period of fifty years, but that he has to serve him until the year of the Jubilee (the fiftieth year) whether this be close at hand or far ahead (Kiddushin 15a; Mekhilta).

Verse 7

וכי ימכר איש את בתו לאמה AND IF A MAN SELL HIS DAUGHTER TO BE A MAIDSERVANT — The text speaks of a minor daughter (under 12 years of age). You might think that he may sell her also although she may have shown signs of incipient puberty and is no longer a minor! You must admit, however, that the à fortiori argument applies: How is it in the case of a woman who was sold at an earlier age (as a minor)? She goes free on showing signs of incipient puberty, as it is said, (v. 11) "then shall she go out free without money", which law we explain to refer to a woman who has showed such signs during the period of slavery! Is it not the conclusion that she who is of such an age and has not yet been sold shall not be sold at all?! (Arakhin 29b, cf. Mekhilta).
לא תצא כצאת העבדים SHE SHALL NOT GO OUT AS THE MENSERVANTS DO — i. e. not under the circumstances that the Canaanitish menservants' departure takes place, for these go free in consequence of the loss of their tooth or eye inflicted by their master; this woman, however, shall not go free because of such loss of her tooth or eye, but shall serve either six years or until the Jubilee, or until she shows signs of incipient puberty. Whichsoever of these periods comes first brings her freedom first. — He (the master), however, has to pay her the value of her eye or the value of her tooth. — Or perhaps this is not so, but, "she shall not go out as the men-servants do," means she shall not go free as the Hebrew menservants do, viz., at the end of six years or at the Jubilee? Scripture, however, states, (Deuteronomy 15:12) And if thy brother, an Hebrew man or an Hebrew woman be sold unto thee", comparing the Hebrew woman with the Hebrew man in regard to all reasons for departure (i. e. also with regard to her going free in the Jubilee, for that she goes free in the seventh year is stated in the text just quoted). How is it in the case of a Hebrew man? He goes free at the end of six years and at the Jubilee! So, too, does the Hebrew woman go free at the end of six years and at the Jubilee. What then do these words mean: "she shall not go out as the menservants do"? They mean: she shall not go free in consequence of the loss of one of "the tips of her limbs" (i. e. the ends of limbs that project from the body) (cf. Mishnah Negaim 6:7) inflicted by the master, as the Canaanitish servants do when they that lose "the tips of their limbs" (Mekhilta; Kiddushin 20a). Incidentally I may add that you might think that the Hebrew manservant shall go free in consequence of loss of one of the tips of his limbs and that only the Hebrew maidservant differs in this respect from the Canaanitish servant, since Scripture expressly specified her in the words: she shall not go out free etc. Scripture, however, states "an Hebrew man or an Hebrew woman" thereby comparing the Hebrew man with the Hebrew woman. What is the case with the Hebrew woman? She does not go free in consequence of loss of one of "the tips of her limbs"! So, too, the Hebrew man does not go free as compensation for the injury inflicted on one of "the tips of his limbs" (cf. Mekhilta).

Verse 8

אם רעה בעיני אדניה IF SHE BE EVIL IN THE EYES OF HER LORD — i. e. that she did not find favour in his eyes so that he might be induced to marry her (cf. Mekhilta).
אשר לו יעדה means: [IF SHE BE EVIL IN THE EYES OF HER LORD] WHO OUGHT TO HAVE DESIGNATED HER to be his wife and ought to have married her, her purchase-money serving as the money necessary to contract a marriage (כסף קידושין). Scripture hereby implicitly tells you that it is his duty to designate her for himself, and since it makes no mention of the manner in which the marriage is to be contracted it implicitly tells you at the same time that she requires no other rite of marriage than the passing of the purchase-money from the master to her father (cf. Kiddushin 19a, Bekhorot 13a).
והפדה means he shall afford her the opportunity to obtain her release from service — that he himself must cooperate in respect to the amount of her ransom. And what is this opportunity he has to give her? That he allows her a deduction from her ransom corresponding to the number of years she has served in his house, as though she were only hired by him. How can this be done? Supposing he had bought her for a maneh (one hundred shekels) and she had served him two years. We say to him: "You knew that she was to go free at the end of six years; it follows then that you bought the labour of each year for one sixth of a maneh. Now she has served you two years, that is the equivalent of one-third of the maneh: accept therefore two-thirds of a maneh as a ransom and let her go free out of your house (Kiddushin 14b).
לעם נכרי לא ימשל למכרה means that neither the master nor the father has a right to sell her to another Jewish man (Kiddushin 18a),
בבגדו בה SEEING THAT HE HATH DEALT DECEITFULLY WITH HER — If "he" means the master then these words signify: if he intends to deal faithlessly with her, i. e. if he does not intend to fulfil the commandment of "Jiud" (of designating her to himself). So also the father — he has no right to sell her to another man since he has dealt faithlessly with her as a father having sold her to this man (Mekhilta; Kiddushin 18b).

Verse 9

ואם לבנו יעדנה AND IF HE HATH BETROTHED HER TO HIS SON — "He" means the master (not like "he" in the previous verse where it refers both to the master and to the father). The verse teaches you that the son also may succeed to his father's rights to betroth her to himself, if his father consents to it. Then it is not necessary for him either (just as is not obligatory for his father; cf. v. 8) to perform another act of betrothal, but he merely says to her: "You are designated for me as my wife by means of the money which your father has received from my father as your price" (Kiddushin 19a).
כמשפט הבנות [HE SHALL DO UNTO HER] AFTER THE MANNER OF DAUGHTERS — who may claim food, clothing and marital duty (Mekhilta).

Verse 10

אם אחרת יקח לו IF HE TAKE HIM ANOTHER WIFE — besides her,
שארה כסותה ועונתה לא יגרע HER FOOD, HER RAIMENT AND THE MARITAL DUTY SHALL HE NOT WITHHOLD — from the maidservant whom he has already designated as his wife.
שארה means FOOD;
כסותה means what the literal sense of the word is:RAIMENT;
עונתה means THE MARITAL DUTY (Ketuvot 47b).

Verse 11

ואם שלש אלה לא יעשה לה means IF HE DO NOT one of THESE THREE UNTO HER. What are these three? He should designate her to himself as his wife, or to his son, or allow her a deduction from the ransom so that she may go free (Mekhilta). This man, however, has neither betrothed her to himself, nor to his son, and she herself does not possess the entire sum paid for her originally that she might buy herself out, therefore shall she go out free without money.
ויצאה חנם THEN SHALL SHE GO OUT FOR NOTHING (i. e. without making any payment) — Scripture adds in her case one more way of acquiring freedom than it provides for menservants. What is this additional way of acquiring freedom? This verse teaches you that she goes free also on account of having shown signs of incipient puberty: but she must stay with him until she reaches this stage of incipient puberty. For that she goes free if the termination of the six years happened to come before the signs of incipient puberty we have already learned, since it is said, (Deuteronomy 15:12),'[and if thy brother], an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman [be sold unto thee], and serve thee six years [then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee]" (cf. Rashi v. 7). What then must be the meaning of what is stated here, "she shall go out for nothing"? That when the signs of incipient puberty appear before the six years are at end she shall go out on account of them. Or perhaps Scripture states here that she shall go free only when she has reached the intermediate stage of womenhood (בגרות, fuller development after twelve years and a half), if this stage happened to be reached before the termination of the six years! To teach this Scripture states "without money" — which would be superfluous since it has already said "she shall go out חנם" — in order to add as another date of her acquiring freedom the time of her reaching this stage of womanhood. And though it necessarily follows that she goes free an reaching the state of בגרות since her freedom is brought about even by the earlier stage of נערות yet if Scripture had not used both terms (both חנם and אין כסף), I might have said that ויצאה חנם refers to the stage of womanhood; therefore both expressions are used in order to give a disputant no opportunity to offer a different explanation (i. e. Scripture wishes to be quite clear on the point in order to preclude all possibility of misunderstanding) (Mekhilta; Kiddushin 4a).

Verse 12

מכה איש ומת WHOSOEVER SMITETH A MAN SO THAT HE DIE [SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH] — Many apparently redundant verses have been written in various sections of the Torah dealing with murderers and I shall explain to the best of my ability why all these statements have been made.
מכה איש ומת WHOSOEVER SMITETH A MAN SO THAT HE DIE — Why is this said (how does the particular form of words used here tell us some point of law which is not contained in another text bearing upon the same subject)? Since it is said, (Leviticus 24:17) "And the man that smiteth (יכה) any person (more lit., the soul of any human being) [shall surely be put to death]", I might have inferred that mere smiting without resultant death is subject to the death penalty. Scripture therefore states here, "Whosoever smiteth a man so that he die [shall surely be put to death]", thus telling you that he is not punishable with death unless the stroke proves fatal. On the other hand if it had stated here, "Whosoever smiteth a man…" and it had not said there "If a man smiteth [any person]", I might have inferred that the murderer is not guilty except if he killed "a man"; whence, however, could I know that he is subject to the death penalty if he killed a woman or a minor? Therefore Scripture states "And if [a man] smiteth any person", thus including even a minor and a woman. Then again: if it had stated only, "Whosoever smiteth a man" I might have inferred that even a minor who smote and

killed a person is punishable with death. Scripture therefore states "and if a man smiteth" — a man but not a minor. Then on the other hand, so far as concerns the statement "And if [a man] smiteth the soul of any man" it might be held that even premature births at a term of eight months are included in the term כל נפש אדם "soul of any man", Scripture therefore states "Whosoever smiteth a man" to intimate that one is not subject to the death penalty unless he kills a viable child — one which is fitted to become a man (Mekhilta).

Verse 13

ואשר לא צדה AND IF A MAN LIE NOT IN WAIT — i. e. if he did not lie in ambush for him (the person whom he killed), nor did he premeditate the blow (Makkot 7b).
צדה is a term denoting "lying in wait"; similarly it says, (I Samuel 24:12) "yet thou liest in wait (צדה) for my soul to take it". It is, however, not correct to say that צדה is of the same derivation as, (Genesis 27:34) הצד ציד "he that hath hunted (הצד) venison", for a ה has no place in the verbal forms of the term denoting "hunting beasts". Then again, the noun form of the latter is צַיִד and that of the former צָדְיָה, whilst the participle of the verb "lying in wait" is צוֹדֶה and that of the other is צָד. I therefore say that its meaning is as the Targum gives it: "and if he did not lie in ambush for him". Menachem ben Seruk placed it in the same section as הצד ציד (i. e. he held that the root is צד and that it has the meaning of "hunting"), but I do not agree with him. If it is to be placed in one of the sections of צד we had better place it in the same section as, (Isaiah 66:12) על צד תנשאו "ye shall be borne upon her side (צד)" and (I Samuel 20:20) "and I will shoot [three arrows] on the side thereof (צדה)", and (Daniel 7:25) "and he shall speak towards the side of (against) the Most High". Thus, here, the words אשר לא צדה could be taken to mean, "he did not turn aside (צָדַד)" to seek some side (occasion) for killing him. But there are objections even to this explanation. At any rate, even if it be connected with צד in this sense, it would still have the meaning "lying in wait".
והאלהים אנה לידו means, BUT GOD GOT IT READY FOR HIS HAND. It has the same meaning as this root has in, (Psalms 91:10) "No evil shall be got ready (תאנה) for thee"; (Proverbs 12:21) "There shall no evil be got ready (תאנה) for the just"; (2 Kings 5:7) "he gets himself ready (מתאנה) for me", i. e. he gets himself ready to discover some occasion against me.
והאלהים אנה לידו BUT GOD GOT IT READY FOR HIS HAND — But why should this go forth from Him (be brought about by God)? This is just what David tells us: (I Samuel 24:13) "As says the proverb of the ancient (הקדמני) "Wickedness proceededeth from the wicked". — "The proverb of the קדמני" is the Torah, the maxim of God, Who it the "Ancient" (Whose existence preceded that) of the world. But where indeed does the Torah say, "Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked"? It says it implicitly in the verse: "But God got it ready for his hand". For what is Scripture here speaking about? About two men, one of whom killed a person with premeditation and the other killed inadvertently, and in neither case were there witnesses to the deed who could testify about it. Consequently, the former was not put to death and the latter was not forced into banishment to a city of refuge (cf. Numbers 35:11). Now God brings them together at the same inn. He who killed with premeditation happens to sit beneath a ladder, and the other who killed inadvertently ascends the ladder and falls, when descending it, upon the man who killed with premeditation and kills him. Witnesses now being present they testify against him, so compelling him to be banished to one of the cities of refuge. The result is that he who killed inadvertently is

actually banished and he who killed with premeditation actually suffers death (cf. Mekhilta and Makkot 10b).
ושמתי לך מקום AND I WILL APPOINT THEE A PLACE — in the wilderness also — WHITHER HE SHALL FLEE — Which was the place that offered him an asylum? The camp of the Levites (Mekhilta; Makkot 12b).

Verse 14

וכי יזד AND IF A MAN ACT INTENTIONALLY — Why is this stated at all (since v. 13 expressly provides a place for the murderer only if he does not lie in wait)? Since it is said, (v. 12) "Whosoever smiteth a man [so that he die shall be put to death]", I might infer that this is so even if the victim is a heathen, and that there it included even a physician who kills a person as a result of his treatment, and a court-officer who kills a man when inflicting on him the forty lashes, and a father who beats and thereby kills his son, and a teacher who chastises his pupil and thereby kills him, and one who kills in error (שוגג, i. e. one who intended to kill a certain person but missed the mark and killed another instead — נתכוין להרוג את זה והרג את זה)! Scripture therefore states here: "if a man acts intentionally (יזיד)" — but not in error (שוגג); "against his fellowman (רעהו)" — but not against a heathen; "to slay with guile (בערמה)" — thus excluding the court-officer, the physician, and one who chastises his son or his pupil for all these though acting intentionally do not do so with guile (cf. Mekhilta).
מעם מזבחי תקחנו למות THOU SHALT TAKE HIM FROM MY ALTAR, THAT HE MAY DIE — even if he is a priest and stands at the altar intending to officiate thou shalt take him away that he die (cf. Mekhilta; Yoma 85a).

Verse 15

ומכה אביו ואמו AND HE THAT SMITETH HIS FATHER OR HIS MOTHER [SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH] — Because Scripture has taught us that he who inflicts a wound upon his fellow-man is liable for damages (cf. Rashi on Exodus 21:24) but is not subject to death, it was compelled to state that he who inflicts a wound on his father or his mother is subject to the death penalty (Mekhilta). He is, however, not punishable with death except for a blow which causes a wound (Sanhedrin 85b).
אביו ואמו means either his father or his mother (Mekhilta).
מות יומת SHALL BE PUT TO DEATH — by strangulation (Mekhilta).

Verse 16

וגנב איש ומכרו AND HE THAT STEALETH A MAN, AND SELLETH HIM, [AND HE BE PREVIOUSLY FOUND IN HIS HAND, HE SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH] — Why is this statement made (how does the particular form of words used here tell us some point of law which is not contained in another text bearing upon the same subject)? Since it is said, (Deuteronomy 24:7) "If a man be found stealing any of his brethren … [then that thief shall die]", I might say that I have here only the law that a man who stole a person is punishable with death. Whence, however, do I know that this is also the case if a woman or a person whose sex is not distinguishable or a hermaphrodite (טומטום ואנדרוגינוס) has stolen a person? Scripture therefore states here: "Whosoever stealeth a man and selleth him". — And again, since Scripture states here: "He that stealeth a man [shall be put to death]", I might say that I have here only the law that if one steals a man he is punishable with death. Whence do I know that this is also the case if he has stolen a woman? Therefore Scripture states, (Deuteronomy 24:7) "[If a man be found] stealing any person [he shall be put to death]". Consequently both verses are necessary: what the one omits the other tells us (Mekhilta; Sanhedrin 85b).

ונמצא בידו implies that witnesses have seen him stealing and also saw him selling the person, and that he has been found in his possession before he had sold him (Mekhilta).
מות יומת HE SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH — by strangulation. Wherever the death-penalty is mentioned in Scripture without being precisely defined strangulation is intended (Mekhilta; Sanhedrin 84b). [It should be noted that Scripture interrupted the context by writing "Whosoever stealeth etc." between the passages, "He that smiteth his father etc." and "He that curseth his father etc.", which passages ought on account of their contents to follow one after the other. I think that this gave rise to the difference of opinion found in Sanhedrin 85a where one Rabbi holds that we must put "smiting" on an equality with "cursing", in spite of the text being interrupted by the verse וגונב, which, however, is placed between them only to teach that in some respects "smiting" and "cursing" have not the same law, — that after the death of the parents "cursing" them is punishable whilst "smiting" them is not; whilst another bolds that since the two verses have been disconnected "smiting" can by no means be put on an equality with, and have the same legal consequenses as, "cursing" (cf. Sanhedrin 85b)].

Verse 17

ומקלל אביו ואמו WHOSOEVER CURSETH HIS FATHER OR HIS MOTHER [SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH] — Why is this stated in this particular form? Since Scripture says, (Leviticus 20:9) "For every man who execrateth his father [or his mother shall surely be put to death]" I might say that I have here only the law that a man who curseth his father or his mother is punishable with death. Whence do I know that this is also the case if a woman curseth her father or her mother? Scripture therefore states here, "Whosoever curseth father or mother" — whosoever generally — intimating that it applies to both man and woman (Mekhilta). But if this be so why is it said, (Leviticus 20:9). "For every man who execrateth etc."? To exclude a minor.
מות יומת SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH — by stoning. And the rule is that wherever the term "his blood is upon him "is used in connection with the death penalty, "execution by stoning" is meant. The following in the passage from which this is evident (בנין אב): (Leviticus 20:27) "they shall overwhelm them with stones: their blood is upon them" — and as regards one who curses father or mother (Leviticus 20:9), Scripture indeed uses the words דמיו בו (Mekhilta; Sanhedrin 66a).

Verse 18

וכי יריבן אנשים AND IF MEN QUARREL — Why is this (vv. 18, 19) stated in this particular form? Since Scripture states, (v. 24) "Eye for eye", we learn from this only that compensation for the loss of limbs has to be paid, but we cannot infer from it that indemnity for loss of time (during which the injured has been disabled from work) and cost of medical treatment have also to be paid; consequently this section (vv. 18 and 19) is said (Mekhilta).
ונפל למשכב BUT KEEPETH HIS BED — The meaning is as the Targum gives it: ויפל לבוטלן "and he falls into inactivity", i. e. he falls into an illness that prevents him from working.

Verse 19

על משענתו (lit., with that on which he relies) — i. e. his former healthy state and vigour (Mekhilta; cf. Onkelos).
ונקה המכה [WHEN HE RISES AGAIN…] HE THAT SMOTE HIM SHALL BE FREED — But could it enter your mind that this person who has not killed anyone at

all should be subject to the death penalty? Why, then, is it necessary to state this? But it is intended to teach you that he is kept in prison until we discover whether the other is completely healed or not, and what the verse implies is this: when this man rises again (אם יקום) and walks in the street in his former vigour, then he who smote him shall be freed from prison, but so long as the other has not risen from the sick-bed etc. the man who smote him is not freed (Ketubot 33b; Sanhedrin 78b).
רק שבתו ONLY [HE SHALL PAY FOR] THE LOSS OF HIS TIME — i. e. for the interruption of his labour due to this illness. If, for instance, he cut off his hand or his foot, we regard the interruption of labour caused by this illness as though his occupation were that of a watchman in a cucumber field (which work can be done even by a man lacking a hand or a foot), for even after he has recovered from the illness he will not be able to do work which requires hands or feet, and indeed the value of his hand or his foot that was cut off the other has already paid to him as "damages" (נזק), as it is said, (v. 24) "hand for hand, foot for foot". (Having compensated him already for loss of capacity as a wage-earner whole in body, it would not be right if this man has again to pay him for loss of time as though he were of full-earning capacity) (Bava Kamma 85b).
ורפא ירפא — Translate it as the Targum does: he shall pay the physician's fee.

Verse 20

וכי יכה איש את עבדו או את אמתו AND IF A MAN SMITE HIS SERVANT OR HIS MAIDSERVANT — Scripture speaks of a Canaanitish servant. Or perhaps this is not so, but it speaks of a Hebrew servant? Scripture however states, (Exodus 21:21) "for he is his money". How is it in the case of his money? It is something that is his forever (i. e. it is something the possession of which is not limited to a definite time)! So also the servant referred to here is such a one as is his forever (and only a Canaanitish servant serves his master for ever, cf. Leviticus 25:46, whilst the Hebrew servant goes free after six years). But surely he (one that smites his servant) is included in the general statement, (Exodus 21:12) "Whosoever smiteth a man [so that he die shall surely be put to death]"; why, then, is this case mentioned at all? But Scripture singles it out from the general statement that he (who smiteth his servant etc.) may be subject to the particular regulation of "a day or two" (Exodus 21:21) — that if he (the servant) does not die beneath his hand and continue to live twenty-four hours his master should be freed from the death-penalty (Mekhilta).
בשבט WITH A ROD — Scripture speaks of a rod that is capable of inflicting death. Or perhaps it speaks even of one that is not capable of inflicting death (but some-how or other the servant died beneath his hand)? Scripture however states, (Numbers 35:17) in reference to an Israellite (cf. Numbers 35:15) "And if he smote him with a stone in the hand, wherewith he may die, [and he die, he is a murderer]". Now is not the following statement a logical conclusion à fortiori? How is it if one has killed an Israelite whose case is more stringent (inasmuch as the leniency mentioned in v. 21 is not applied to it)? He is not subject to the death penalty unless he smote him with an instrument capable of inflicting death and unless it be a limb through the striking of which by such an instrument he is likely to die! Then in the case of a servant where (as can be seen from v. 21) the conditions are less stringent, does it not follow all the more that he is not subject to the death penalty? (cf. Mekhilta).
נקם ינקם HE SHALL SURELY BE AVENGED — This means execution by the sword. For thus does Scripture state, (Leviticus 26:25) "a sword avenging the vengeance of my covenant" (Mekhilta; Sanhedrin 52b).

Verse 21

אך אם יום או יומים יעמד לא יקם NOTWITHSTANDING IF HE CONTINUE A DAY OR TWO, HE SHALL NOT BE AVENGED — If the master is free of the death penally in case of the servant remaining alive one day, is it not logical that he is free if he lives two days (what need is there for Scripture to add יומים)? But it adds it to show that the term יום is to be defined by יומים — "a day that is like two days". And what kind of day is thereby meant? A period of twenty-four hours (a day which comprises a part of two separate days) (cf. Mekhilta).
לא יקם כי כספו הוא HE SHALL NOT BE AVENGED: FOR HE IS HIS MONEY — However, any other person who smote him (the servant) is subject to the death penalty although he lived 24 hours before dying.

Verse 22

וכי ינצו אנשים IF MEN STRIVE with each other and one intended to strike the other and inadvertently struck the woman (Sanhedrin 79b).
ונגפו AND HURT [A WOMAN WITH CHILD] — The root נגף always signifies "dashing against" and "striking". Examples are: (Psalms 91:15) "lest thou dash (תגוף) thy foot against a stone"; (Jeremiah 13:16) "and before your feet dash (יתנגפו)"; (Isaiah 8:14) "but for a stone of dashing (נגף).
ולא יהיה אסון AND YET THERE BE NO MISCHIEF — no further mischief with the woman (Sanhedrin 79b).
ענוש יענש HE SHALL SURELY BE AMERCED to pay the value of the offspring to the husband. We estimate her value according to what she is worth if she were sold as a slave in the market giving her a higher value on account of her being with child (Bava Kamma 49a).
ענוש יענש (lit., he shall surely be punished) — It means that they shall exact money from him. ענוש is used here in the same sense as in, (Deuteronomy 22:19) "And they shall amerce (וענשו) him an hundred shekel of silver".
כאשר ישית עליו וגו׳ means, when the husband will summons him before the Court that they should place upon him a fine for this (cf. Mekhilta),
ונתן THEN HE SHALL GIVE — i. e. the man that struck the woman shall give the value of the offspring.
בפללים ACCORDING TO THE DECISION OF THE JUDGES (Mekhilta).

Verse 23

ואם אסון יהיה AND IF THERE BE ANY FURTHER MISCHIEF — in the case of the woman,
ונתת נפש תחת נפש THEN THOU SHALT GIVE SOUL FOR SOUL. Our Rabbis differ as to the explanation of the word נפש the first time it occurs here. There are some who say that it actually signifies "life" (i. e. life for life), others say that it means monetary compensation but not literally life, and they say that this must be so because he who intends to kill a certain person and inadvertently kills another instead, (as is the case here), is exempt from the death penalty, and has only to pay to his heirs his value estimating this as though he were sold as a slave in the market (Sanhedrin 79a).

Verse 24

עין תחת עין EYE FOR EYE — If one blinded the eye of his fellow-man he has to pay him the value of his eye, i. e. he pays him how much his value would be diminished if he were to be sold as a slave in the market. In the same way all other cases are to be dealt with, but it does not mean

the actual cutting off of the offender's limb — just as our Rabbis have explained in the chapter beginning with the word החובל (Bava Kamma 84a).

Verse 25

כויה תחת כויה BURNING FOR BURNING — כויה is a burn produced by fire. Up to here (i.e. v. 24) Scripture has spoken of a bodily injury that is attended by a decrease of the market-value of the person injured; here, however, it speaks of a case in which there is no decrease of value but pain alone: if, for instance, a man burns another on his nails with a hot spit, we estimate how much a person like him (the injured) would be willing to accept for undergoing a pain like this, and such an amount the other has to pay as indemnity (Bava Kamma 84b).
פצע is an injury which draws blood — the accused having crushed the other's flesh; navrure in old French In such a case it all depends upon what happens: if any decrease in his market-value is caused the other pays him an indemnity (נזק); if he is confined to his bed, he has to pay for loss of time, for medical treatment, for the shame he feels at being somewhat disfigured and for the pain he has been made to suffer. This passage, (פצע תחת פצע), is apparently redundant, but our Rabbis explained in the chapter beginning with the word החובל (Bava Kamma 85b) that Scripture intends by this statement to make one liable to pay for pain inflicted even in a case when one has already paid damages (נזק) for decrease in one's value — that although he has paid him the value of his hand, we do not exempt him from paying also for pain inflicted, arguing thus: Since he has, so to say, purchased his hand by paying its value, he was entitled to cut if off by whatever means he pleases; but we say that he ought to have removed it by means of a poisonous drug when he would not have suffered so much pain. He, however, cut if off by means of an iron instrument and caused him great pain; therefore he is bound to pay for pain inflicted also.
חבורה is a wound in which the blood is congealed but does not come out, only that the flesh on that spot becomes red. The word חבורה means tache in old French Similar is, (Jeremiah 13:23) "[Can an Ethiopian change his skin] or the leopard his spots (חברברתיו)". The Targum renders it (חבורה) by משקופי, an expression denoting "beating", batture in old French Similarly it translates (Genesis 41:6) שדופות קדים, "blasted with the east", by שקיפן קדום, "beaten by the east wind". So, too, the lintel it termed "משקוף" (from the root שקף "to beat upon"), as, e. g., in the expression על המשקוף, because the door beats against it.

Verse 26

את עין עבדו [AND IF A MAN SMITE] THE EYE OF HIS SERVANT — of a Canaanitish servant; but the Hebrew servant does not got free on account of his tooth or his eye having been knocked out by his master, as we have stated in our comment on the passage לא תצא כצאת העבדים (v. 7).
תחת עינו [HE SHALL LET HIM GO FREE] FOR HIS EYE'S SAKE — and similarly if he cuts off one of the twenty-four "tips of limbs" viz., the fingers, the toes, the two ears, the nose and the ראש הגויה, the membrum (cf. Mishnah Negaim 6:7). But why, since the precept is not applicable to eye and tooth alone but to twenty-four limbs, are both the eye and the tooth, mentioned? One would have stufficed! Because if only the eye were mentioned and not the tooth also, I might have said: What it the characteristic of the eye? It came into the world together with him! So, too, this law is applicable only to such limbs as came into the world together with him, but not to the tooth, for the tooth did not come into the world together with him. If, on the other hand, only the tooth had been mentioned and not the eye also, I might have said: the law applies even to a case when the master knocked out a child-slave's tooth which

grows again (more lit., which has a substitute) after a time. Therefore the eye is also mentioned to intimate that the law can be applied only when the master knocks out the tooth of his adult slave which, like the eye, does not grow again. (Kiddushin 24b).

Verse 27

Verse 28

וכי יגח שור AND IF AN OX THRUST — This law applies to an ox as well to any other cattle, wild beast or fowl, but Scripture mentions the ox, because it speaks of what usually occurs (Bava Kamma 54b).
ולא יאכל את בשרו AND ITS FLESH SHALL NOT BE EATEN — From what is implied in the words "the ox shall surely be stoned" do I not know that it becomes carrion, and carrion of course is prohibited to be eaten? Why then is it stated, "and its flesh shall not be eaten"? It is to intimate that even if he slaughtered the animal according to regulation after sentence of stoning has been pronounced but before it had been carried out it is forbidden to be eaten. Whence may it be proved that under such circumstances it is prohibited to derive any other benefit from it? Scripture therefore states: "and the owner of the ox is נקי" — it is a phrase such as a man uses to his fellow: that man there has gone away "empty" (נקי) of all his property (he has nothing whatever left), and he has not the slightest benefit of it. This is how the Halachic Midrash explains it (Bava Kamma 41a). However, the real sense of ובעל השור נקי, is what it literally means: the owner of the ox shall be guiltless. Because Scripture says with reference to the מועד (an ox which inflicted injury three times in succession, and about which its owner must therefore be regarded as forewarned), (v. 29) "and his owner also shall be put to death", it was forced to state with regard to the תם (a hitherto innocuous animal, having inflicted an injury for the first time) "the owner of the ox shall be guiltless".

Verse 29

מתמל שלשם [BUT IF THE OX HAS BEEN WONT TO THRUST] YESTERDAY AND BEFORE YESTERDAY — Here you have including the present occasion the three times an ox must gore before it can be declared a מועד (Bava Kamma 23b).
והועד בבעליו AND IT HATH BEEN TESTIFIED TO HIS OWNER — הועד (from the root עוד) is an expression for warning through witnesses (Bava Kamma 24a), as in, (Genesis 43:3) "the man hath solemnly forewarned (הָעֵד הַעִד) us".
והמית איש וגו׳ BUT HE HATH PUT TO DEATH A MAN [OR WOMAN] — Since it states, (v. 28) "If an ox gore (יגח) [a man or a woman, that he die]" I might say that I have only the law dealing with the case that it kills by pushing him with the horn (the root נגח being mainly used of thrusting with the horn, cf. e.g., Deuteronomy 33:17) but whence can the law be derived that it applies also to the case where it kills by biting, thrusting, or kicking? Scripture therefore states "he hath put to death [a man or a woman]" thus intimating that so long as death is caused by the animal it is liable to stoning.
וגם בעליו יומת AND HIS OWNER ALSO SHALL BE PUT TO DEATH by a visitation of God. You might perhaps think he shall be punished by human agency (the judges)! Scripture, however, states, (Numbers 35:21) "he that smote him (a human being) shall surely be put to death; for he is a murderer" — the force of these last words is to intimate that for a murder committed by himself you shall put him to death (i. e. he suffers death by human agency as is the law regarding a murderer), but you shall not put him to

death on account of a murder committed by his ox; this must be left to God (Sanhedrin 15b; cf. also Mekhilta).

Verse 30

אם כפר יושת עליו WHEN THERE BE SET ON HIM A RANSOM — This אם is not conditional (i. e. it does not mean "if" the heirs feel inclined to set on him a ransom) but it has the same meaning as in (Exodus 22:24) "When (אם) thou lendest money" where it has the meaning of אשר, "when" (for it is a duty to lend money to the poor and it is not optional). It is the law regarding him that the court should set on him a ransom.
ונתן פדיון נפשו HE SHALL GIVE THE RANSOM OF HIS SOUL — the value of the injured person; this is the view of R. Ishmael, R. Akiba, however, says that it means the value of the person who caused the injury (Mekhilta).

Verse 31

או בן ינגח WHETHER HE HAVE THRUST A SON — a son who is a minor;
או בת יגח OR HAVE THRUST A DAUGHTER, who is a minor. Since it states, (v. 29) "and hath put to death a man or a woman", one might think that the owner is liable only for the death of adult persons, Scripture therefore states, "whether he have thrust a son etc." to make him liable for the death of minors equally as for that of adults (Mekhilta).

Verse 32

אם עבד או אמה IF [AN OX SHALL THRUST] A MANSERVANT OR A MAIDSERVANT — Canaanitish servants (Mekhilta).
שלשים שקלים יתן HE SHALL GIVE THIRTY SHEKELS — This is the enactment of Scripture (and no reason is given) — the indemnity shall be thirty shekels whether the slave was worth a thousand zuz or was worth no more than one denar. A shekel weighs four gold coins, making half an ounce according to the correct weight of Cologne.

Verse 33

וכי יפתח איש בור AND IF A MAN SHALL OPEN A PIT which was covered over, and he now uncovered it.
או כי יכרה OR IF A MAN SHALL DIG [A PIT] — Why is this stated? If he becomes liable for opening one that already exists how much the more is he liable for digging a new one! However, it does not mean that he digs a pit from beginning to end but it is intended to include in this law a person who digs after another has dug (i. e. who deepens to a height of ten handbreaths a pit which another has already excavated to a depth less than this. Before he did this an animal which fell into the pit was unlikely to kill itself; now, however, such a fall may prove fatal) — that such a one alone becomes liable (cf. Bava Kamma 51a).
ולא יכסנו AND SHALL NOT COVER IT — if, however, he did cover it, though he did not fill it in with earth" he is not liable (Bava Kamma 50a). Scripture speaks of one who excavates a pit in a public thoroughfare (cf. Bava Kamma 49b).
שור או חמור AN OX OR AN ASS — This is the law also with respect to all cattle and beasts, because wherever the Torah prescribes something with regard to "ox or ass", we derive it (the fact that it applies to all cattle and beasts) on the grounds of the verbal similarity of שור in the text in question with שור which occurs in the law prescribing the Sabbath rest, for — with regard to the latter — it is stated, (Exodus 23:12) "that thine ox and thine ass may rest". Now how is it in the latter case? We know that all cattle and beasts are to be treated in this respect as the "ox", because in another passage referring to Sabbath (Deuteronomy

5:14) it is expressly said "[thy ox and thy ass] and all thy cattle"! So here, too, all cattle and beasts are to be treated as the ox. The only reason why ox and ass are alone mentioned is to imply: "an ox" — but not a man, "an ass" — but not vessels (Bava Kamma 53b).

Verse 34

בעל הבור THE OWNER OF THE PIT [SHALL PAY FOR IT] — This means the one who occasioned the damage. Although the pit was not his, — for he dug it in the public thoroughfare, — Scripture regards him as its "owner" (בעל הבור) in so far that he becomes responsible for the damage caused by it.
כסף ישיב לבעליו [THE OWNER OF THE PIT SHALL PAY FOR IT] AND RESTORE MONEY UNTO THE OWNER OF THEM — The word ישיב is apparently redundant; it would have sufficed to state ישלם כסף לבעליו but it is added to include as legal tender in this case even bran (i. e. the restitution need not be money so long as he actually restores something of money-value). (Bava Kamma 7a).
והמת יהיה לו AND THE DEAD BEAST SHALL BELONG TO HIM — to him who has suffered the loss. We assess the value of the carcass and he (the claimant) takes it at this value in part payment, and the man who caused the damage pays him in addition to this as much as will make up the whole loss he has suffered (Bava Kamma 10b).

Verse 35

וכי יגף AND IF [AN OX] HURT [AN OX OF HIS FELLOW-MAN] — יגף means to thrust; whether it injures by horns or the whole body, or whether it kicks with its foot or bites it with its teeth, all are included in the term נגף, for נגף means nothing else than מכה — the impact of one thing upon another (Mekhilta).
שור איש means שור של איש THE OX OF A MAN (i. e. שור is in construct state to the word איש).
ומכרו את השור וגו׳ THEN THEY SHALL SELL THE LIVE ONE — Scripture is speaking of a case when both animals are of the same value: an ox of the value of 200 zuz that killed another also valued at 200 zuz. Then whether the carcass is worth much or whether it is worth little, as soon as one takes one-half of the living animal and one-half of the dead, and the other takes one-half of the living animal and one-half of the dead, it follows that each of them suffers the loss of half the damage which the death of the animal has caused. Scripture teaches us that the תם (which is the animal spoken of here — one that inflicted injury for the first time) always pays half damages. For from what it states about animals of the same value you may gather the rule for such as are of different values — that the law regarding the תם is for its owner to pay half damages, neither more nor less. Or perhaps you might say that also of animals which were of unequal value when living Scripture states that both of them must be halved! But if you say this, you will find that sometimes the man who occasions the damage may benefit considerably — namely, when the carcass is worth when sold unto heathens much more than the value of the ox which inflicted the injury. And you must admit that it is impossible that Scripture should say that the man who occasioned the damage should benefit by it. Or it may sometimes happen that the claimant will receive much more than the value of the whole damage — namely, when one-half of the value of the defendant's ox is worth more than the whole value of the claimant's ox. Consequently if you still maintain this (that the animals are to be halved even when they are of different value), the result may well be that the case of the תם is more severely dealt with than that of the מועד (when the claimant gets full damages — but not more). You must therefore needs admit that Scripture speaks here only of animals that are of equal value, and that it teaches

you that the owner of a תם has to pay half damages; and from what is said in respect to animals of equal value you may derive the law in respect of such as are of different values — that in any case when a person is paid half the damages caused to him we value the carcass for him (the claimant); and as regards the depreciation in value caused by its death — he must accept a sum equal to half of that depreciation together with the carcass and has to be satisfied (Hebrew: and goes his way). But why does Scripture use this mode of expression and does not simply say: he (the owner of the תם) shall pay the half? To teach you by the way that the תם pays only to the extent of its own value (Hebrew: from what can be obtained for its body). So in case it gores another and itself dies, the claimant gets at most the carcass of the ox that caused the damage, and if that does not amount to one-half of the damage, he has to suffer the loss. Or take another case: an ox of the value of one maneh (200 zuz) that gored an ox of the value of 500 zuz (so that the loss is more than the whole value of the ox that caused it). The claimant still does not get more than the living ox; and the defendant is not bound to make up the deficiency from his own money, for the תם is not responsible to such an extent as to make its owner liable to pay from his own property) (Bava Kamma 16b).

Verse 36

או נודע means, OR it was not a תם but IT IS KNOWN THAT THE OX WAS WONT TO THRUST to-day yesterday and the day before yesterday — thus you have the three acts of goring required to make it a שלם ישלם שור (Bava Kamma 23b) .מועד HE SHALL SURELY PAY AN OX [FOR THE OX] — i. e. the full damage. והמת יהיה לו AND THE DEAD SHALL BELONG TO HIM — to the claimant (Bava Kamma 23b) as part of this full payment. In addition to it the defendant has to complete the amount until the claimant has been paid for his entire loss.

Verse 37

חמשה בקר וגו׳ [HE SHALL PAY] FIVE OF THE HERD etc. — Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai said, "The Omnipresent has much consideration for the honour of His creatures: when an ox — an animal that can walk by itself — has been stolen and sold or slaughtered, in which case the thief had not to degrade himself by carrying it on his shoulder, he has to pay fivefold restitution. In the case of a lamb, however, which he had to carry on his shoulder, he has to pay only the fourfold, because he was forced to degrade himself by carrying it". Rabbi Meir said, "Come and see how great is the virtue of labour: In the case of the theft of an ox which he (the thief) withdrew from its labour, thereby causing a loss to its owner, he has to repay five oxen, in the case of a lamb which he has not withdrawn from its labour — only four (Bava Kamma 79b).
תחת השה … תחת השור FOR THE OX … FOR THE LAMB — The text repeats the words שור and שה unnecessarily (for it would have sufficed to state כי יגנוב איש שור וטבחו או מכרו חמשה בקר ישלם תחתיו וארבע הצאן תחת השה "And if a man shall steal an ox … then he shall pay five of the herd for it, or four sheep in place of the lamb") to tell you that the rule providing for four-fold and five-fold restitution applies solely to the ox and the lamb (and not to any other cattle) (Bava Kamma 67b).

Verse 38

Chapter 22

Verse 1

אם במחתרת means when he was breaking in into the house (i. e. in the very act of forcing an entry, but at no other moment).
אין לו דמים THERE SHALL NO GUILT OF BLOOD BE INCURRED FOR HIM — This is not regarded as a murder; it is as though he (the thief) has been dead from the beginning of his criminal act (אין לו דמים is taken to mean: he, the thief, had no blood — no vitality). Here the Torah teaches you the rule: "If one comes with the intention of killing you, be quick and kill him". — And this burglar actually came with the intention of killing you, for he knew full well that no one can hold himself in check, looking on whilst people are stealing his property before his eyes and doing nothing. He (the thief) therefore obviously came with this purpose in view — that in case the owner of the property would resist him, he would kill him (Sanhedrin 72a).

Verse 2

אם זרחה השמש עליו IF THE SUN SHONE UPON HIM — This is only a metaphorical expression signifying: if the fact is clear to you that he is peaceably disposed towards you. The simile is: just as the sun brings peace (happiness) to the world so if it is evident to you that he did not come with the intention of killing, even if the owner of the property would resist him (Sanhedrin 72a), as, for instance, when a father breaks in to steal the money of his son, for it is certain that the father cherishes feelings of pity for his child and the matter of taking human life is not in his thoughts at all, — then
דמים לו, then he is to be regarded as a living man (cf. Rashi's explanation of אין לו דמים v. 1.), and it is murder if the householder kills him.
שלם ישלם means the thief shall only restore the money he has stolen but is not subject to the death penalty. Onkelos who renders אם זרחה השמש עליו by, "If the eye of witnesses fall upon him" chose a different way of explaining the verse, namely, that if witnesses surprise him before the householder appears, and when the householder is going towards him they warn him not to kill him (the thief), then דמים לו, he is punishable if he kills him; for since there are people watching him the thief surely has no thought of taking human life and will not kill the owner of the property.

Verse 3

המצא תמצא IF THE THEFT BE CERTAINLY FOUND IN HIS HAND i. e. in his possession (Mekhilta), he having neither sold it nor slaughtered it he shall pay only double.
משור עד חמור WHETHER IT BE AN OX OR AN ASS — Every thing stolen whether it be animate or inanimate comes under the category of things for which two-fold compensation ("kefel") must be made, for it is said in another verse, (8) "[for every matter of tresspass whether it be for ox, for ass…], for sheep, for raiment or for any lost thing … he shall pay double unto his fellow-man"(Bava Kamma 62b).
חיים שנים ישלם means, two living animals (חיים שנים) shall he pay and he shall not give dead animals in payment (Mekhilta) — but either living animals or the value of living animals.

Verse 4

כי יבער … בעירה ובער All these terms are connected with the word בעיר which signifies "cattle", as in (Numbers 20:4) אנחנו ובעירנו "we and our cattle".
כי יבער means accordingly, he takes his cattle into the field or the vineyard of his fellow-man and causes damage to him by one of these two ways: either by the mere fact that he lets his cattle go (tread) there (ושלח את בעירו), or by letting it graze there (ובער). Our Rabbis explained (Bava Kamma 2b), that ושלח refers to the damage done by "treading" (Rashi uses a Biblical phrase Deuteronomy 5:1. "treading of the hollow of the foot") and ובער to the damage caused by the tooth that eats up and removes (מבערת) the crops (grazing).
בשדה אחר means בשדה של אחר IN THE FIELD OF ANOTHER MAN (not "in another field", when it would be punctuated בְּשָׂדֶה, for בִּשְׂדֵה is the construct form).
מיטב שדהו … ישלם THE BEST OF HIS FIELD SHALL HE PAY — We assess the damage, and if the defendant proposes to make restitution to him for the damage he has suffered with "land'" then he has to pay him with the best of his fields. If for instance the damage amounted to a Sela he has to give him a Sela-worth of the best of the fields he possesses). Scripture teaches you that in cases of damages (which it is proposed to pay with land) we assess and collect them from the best land of the defendant (Mekhilta; Bava Kamma 6b).

Verse 5

כי תצא אש IF A FIRE GOETH FORTH — i. e. even if it goeth forth (extends) by itself (Bava Kamma 24b) from the field in which it has been lit into another persons field.
ומצאה קוצים AND CATCH IN THORNS —chardons in old French
ונאכל גדיש SO THAT THE STACKS OF CORN [OR THE STANDING CORN] BE CONSUMED, because it (the fire) licked up the thorns and gradually reached the stacks of corn or the standing corn, i. e. corn that is still attached to the ground.
או השדה OR THE FIELD — because it (the fire) liked up his furrow (the newly broken soil), so that it became hard and he (the owner) has to plough it again (Bava Kamma 60a).
שלם ישלם המבער HE THAT KINDLED [THE CONFLAGRATION] SHALL SURELY PAY — Although he has lit the fire on his own soil and it extended by itself through the thorns which it came across, he has to make restitution because he did not guard his fire (lit., burning coals) that it should not extend and cause damage.

Verse 6

וגנב מבית האיש AND IT BE STOLEN OUT OF THE MAN'S HOUSE — i. e. according to his statement),
אם ימצה הגנב ישלם IF THE THIEF BE FOUND HE — the thief — SHALL PAY שנים DOUBLE to the owner (to the bailor not to the bailee) (Bava Kamma 63b).

Verse 7

אם לא ימצא הגנב IF THE THIEF BE NOT FOUND then this bailee — who is בעל הבית "the owner of the house" for the time being (since the bailment is then in his possession although he is not really its owner) — shall come.
ונקרב אל AND SHALL APPROACH UNTO THE אלהים — the judges, to put his case against the other and to swear unto him that he has not put forth his hands against his property (Bava Kamma 63b).

Verse 8

על כל דבר פשע FOR ALL MANNER OF TRESSPASS in which he (the bailee) is proved a liar in respect of his oath (i. e. is convicted of perjury), because witnesses testify that he himself has stolen it and the judges condemn him on the evidence of the witnesses,
ישלם שנים לרעהו HE SHALL PAY THE DOUBLE TO HIS FELLOW-MAN — Scripture teaches you that in a case of a bailment where one pleads that it has been stolen from him and it is proved that he himself has stolen it he is liable to pay "kefel" (twice the value of the article) to the owner. When, however, does this law hold good? In the case that he has taken an oath that it has been stolen from him and witnesses afterwards appear and testify to the contrary. For our Rabbis expound this phrase as follows: (Bava Kamma 63b) "and the owner of the house shall approach unto the judges" — this "approaching the judges" is an expression signifying the taking of an oath. You say that it means approaching the judges in order to take an oath, but perhaps this is not so, and it means that he approaches them to put his case, and that the meaning of the verse is. that as soon as the bailee appears before the court and denies any liability, saying, "it has been stolen" from me, he at once becomes liable to pay double if witnessess appear who testify that the bailment is still in his possession? You certainly cannot argue thus! For "conversion" (שליחות יד) is mentioned here and later on (v. 10) it is mentioned again: "Then shall the oath of the Lord be between the two of them, if he hath not put his hand (אם לא שלח ידו) unto his fellow-man's goods". — Now, what is the meaning of the phrase in the latter case? It is evident from what precedes it that it is a matter of taking an oath! So also here it is a matter of taking an oath. (Bava Kamma 63b).
אשר יאמר כי הוא זה means, according to the literal sense, any article about which the witness will say: "this is the very article" about which you have taken an oath that it has been stolen from you; see, it is actually in your possession! — then the matter of dispute between the two of them shall come before the judges. These shall examine the witnesses, and if they prove to be trustworthy and they (the judges) condemn this bailee, then he has to pay double. If, however, they condemn the witnesses because these are found to be "plotting" witnesses (זוממין) then shall they (the witnesses) pay double to the bailee. Our Rabbis, of blessed memory, however, explained that כי הוא זה tells us that no oath can be imposed upon him (the defendant) except if he admits a part of the other's claim asserting, "So-and-so much I owe you, and the rest has been stolen from me" (according to this explanation the phrase כי הוא זה is not a statement of the witnesses but that of the bailee himself; i. e. he says, כי הוא זה, "it is this only" that you have to claim and not as much as you say) (Bava Kamma 107b).

Verse 9

כי יתן איש אל רעהו חמור או שור IF A MAN GIVE UNTO HIS FELLOW-MAN AN ASS OR AN OX — The first section (v. 6—9) speaks of the gratuitous bailee and therefore (since the chattels are kept for the use of the bailor only) Scripture frees him of liability for theft, as it is written, (v. 6) "[If a man shall give … to keep] and it be stolen out of the man's house, if the thief be not found, then the owner of the house shall approach the judges" to take an oath (cf. Rashi v. 7). You may learn from this that he (the bailee) frees himself from liability by this oath. This section (v. 9—12), however, speaks of a "bailee for payment" (שומר שכר) who is therefore not free from liability if the object has been stolen, as it is written, "but if it be certainly stolen from him, he shall pay [unto the owner thereof]" (Bava Metzia 94b). However, for any loss over which he has no control — if, for instance, the animal died a natural death or has been injured by a wild beast, or forcibly seized by robbers, and אין רואה NO ONE SEEING IT that could testify in this matter

Verse 10

שבעת ה׳ תהיה THEN SHALL THE OATH OF THE LORD BE BETWEEN THEM BOTH — i. e. he (the bailee) must take an oath that the case was as he says (that it died or was injured or captured), and also that he had not previously put forth his hand against it (the object), using it for his own purposes. For if he had thus "put forth his hand" and afterwards some accident, as described, happened to it he is held liable for loss by accident (Bava Metzia 94b), since he has broken the terms of the contract. —
ולקח בעליו AND THE OWNER OF IT SHALL ACCEPT IT — i. e. shall accept the oath (Bava Kamma 106a),
ולא ישלם AND HE — the bailee — SHALL NOT PAY HIM (the bailor) anything, not even the capital (קרן).

Verse 11

Verse 12

אם טרף יטרף IF IT BE TORN IN PIECES — by wild beasts.
יביאהו עד THEN LET HIM BRING WITNESSES that it has been torn in pieces by accident and he shall be freed from liability.
הטרפה לא ישלם HE SHALL NOT PAY THAT WHICH HAS BEEN TORN — It does not say טרפה לא ישלם "one which has been torn he shall not pay for" — but it says "the torn one", (the one mentioned here, viz., that which was torn without him being able to prevent it). Because there is a torn beast for which he has to pay and a torn beast for which he has not to pay. For an animal torn by a cat, a fox or a marten he has indeed to make restitution; but for one torn by a wolf, a lion, a bear or a serpent he is not liable to pay. But how do you come to make such a distinction (lit., who whispered to you to draw such a conclusion)? Because, you see, it states, "and if it die or be injured, or be captured". Now what is the characteristic of natural death? One cannot save from it! Thus, also, the injury and the capture must be such that he was unable to save the animal from it (cf. Mekhilta).

Verse 13

וכי ישאל איש AND IF A MAN BORROWS — The purpose of this verse is to tell you that the borrower is liable for loss from whatever cause even from accident.
בעליו אין עמו THE OWNER THEREOF NOT BEING WITH IT (lit., with "him") — i. e. if the owner of the ox is not employed with the borrower in his work (Bava Metzia 95b).

Verse 14

אם בעליו עמו BUT IF THE OWNER THEREOF BE WITH IT (lit., with "him") — whether he be employed in the very kind of work for which the animal has been borrowed, or whether he be employed in any other work of the borrower — provided that he (the owner) was employed by the borrower when the loan was effected it is not necessary, in order to free him from restitution that he should be employed by the bailee at the time when the injury or death took place (Bava Metzia 95b).
אם שכיר הוא IF IT BE HIRED — i. e. if the ox has not been borrowed but hired, בא בשכרו THEN IT CAME FOR ITS HIRE into the hand of this hirer and not by way of loan. For he does not get the entire benefit of the transaction since he is using it only because he has paid hire for it and

consequently the owner benefits also; therefore the law applicable to a borrower does not apply in his case — that he should be held liable for loss by accident. Scripture, however, does not state explicity what his (the hirer's) law actually is — whether he has to be treated as the gratuitous bailee (שומר חנם) or as the bailee for payment (שומר שכר), and therefore the Sages in Israel differ in their opinion as to how the hirer (שוכר) has to make restitution. R. Meir says he is responsible only as a gratuitous bailee, whilst R. Judah says, even as a bailee for payment (Bava Metzia 80b).

Verse 15

וכי יפתה AND IF A MAN ENTICE [A VIRGIN] — i. e. if he speaks kindly to her until she submits to him. Thus does also the Targum take it: ארי ישדל "if a man persuades", the root שדל (the Pael conjugation) in Aramaic being the equivalent of פִּתָּה in Hebrew.
מהר ימהרנה HE SHALL SURELY GIVE HER THE MARRIAGE PRICE — He shall assign her a marriage portion as is the practice of a man to do to his wife, i. e. he shall write her a Ketuba (marriage contract providing for a marriage portion) and shall marry her (Mekhilta).

Verse 16

כמהר הבתולת AS THE MARRIAGE PRICE OF THE VIRGINS — which is limited to fifty shekels in the case of one who outrages a virgin, for it is said, (Deuteronomy 22:29) "Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver" (Mekhilta; Ketubot 10a).

Verse 17

מכשפה לא תחיה THOU SHALT NOT SUFFER A WITCH TO LIVE — This does not mean that you may kill her but she shall be put to death by the court. Both men and women who practise witchcraft are included in this law but in using the feminine term מכשפה Scripture speaks of what is usually the case; for it is women who mostly practise witchcraft (Sanhedrin 67a).

Verse 18

כל שכב עם בהמה מות יומת — All who have carnal connection with beasts, whether men or women, shall surely be put to death — by stoning, for it states of such, (Leviticus 20:16) "their blood is upon them" (cf. Rashi on Exodus 21:17) (Mekhilta)].

Verse 19

לָאֱלֹהִים means TO IDOLS — If the word (a noun) were punctuated לֵאלֹהִים, with Tzéré under the first ל it would be necessary to define it more closely by adding the adjective אחרים = strange (gods — idols); now, however, that it says לָאֱלֹהִים it is not necessary to define it more closely by adding the word אחרים. For wherever ל or ב are prefixed to a word if it (the prefix) be punctuated with Chataph (שוא), as e. g., לְמֶלֶךְ a king, לְמִדְבָּר, to a desert, לָעִיר, to a city, it must be explained to which king, to which desert, to which city. The same is the case if the ל or ב has a Chirik instead of a Sheva which happens when they are placed before a word beginning with Sheva, as e.g., in לִמְלָכִים for kings, לִרְגָלִים, for festivals, (quoted from Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1:1) it is necessary to state for which kings or festivals, and if he does not state this, all kings and festivals are implied by these words. Similarly here: the word לֵאלֹהִים "to gods", would imply "all gods", including even Him of Whom the term אלהים is used in a holy sense (i. e. the Most High God). When,

however, it (the prefix) is vowelled with Patach (or Kametz if the following letter cannot take Dagesh), as לַמֶּלֶךְ and לַמִּדְבָּר and לָעִיר it is quite plain which king one is speaking of, and similarly in the case of לָעִיר "to the city", it is quite plain of which city one is speaking. In the same way, לָאֱלֹהִים, to the gods, means to those gods which in another passage you have been forbidden to worship. A similar instance is, (Psalms 86:8) אין כמוך בָּאֱלֹהִים, "there is none like unto Thee among the gods" — because he did not more closely define it by the addition of some word like אחרים, it was necessary for him to vowel the ל with Patach (Kametz).
יחרם means SHALL BE PUT TO DEATH — Why is this verse with its predicate יחרם said at all? Was not the death penalty for him (the idolator) stated in another passage: (Deuteronomy 17:5) "Thou shalt bring forth that man or that woman [who have done that evil thing … and stone them]"? But the reason is: because Scripture does not specify there for what form of worship he (the idolator) is liable to death and it merely states, "and hath gone and served other gods" — now, in order that you might not say that any kind of worship offered to idols is punishable with death, Scripture comes and definitely tells you here: "one who sacrificeth unto any god [shall surely be put to death]", to teach you that all kinds of worship which have a certain characteristic of "sacrifice" are meant here. What is this characteristic of sacrifice? It is an act of worship performed in honour of the Lord in the "Interior" (i. e. in the Temple)! So I mean to include as punishable by death anyone offering incense and libation since these are also acts of worship performed in the Temple, and that one is liable for these acts if he performed them in honour of any idol, whether this be the usual way of worshipping it or whether this be not the usual way of worshipping it. But other forms of adoration which are shown to some idols but which are not peculiar to the worship of the idol which one happens to be worshipping, — if, e. g., one sweeps the place before the idol in its honour, or one lays the dust in front of it by sprinkling water there, or one embraces or kisses it, — are not punishable by death (cf. Sanhedrin 60b).

Verse 20

וגר לא תונה — means, do not vex him with words (referring to the fact that he is a stranger); contrarier in old French Similar is, (Isaiah 49:26) "And I will feed them that vex thee (מוניך) with their own flesh".
ולא תלחצנו NOR OPPRESS HIM — by robbing him of money (Mekhilta).
כי גרים הייתם FOR YE WERE STRANGERS — If you vex him he can vex you also by saying to you: "You also descend from strangers". Do not reproach thy fellow-man for a fault which is also thine (Mekhilta). Wherever גר occurs in Scriptures it signifies a person who has not been born in that land (where he is living) but has come from another country to sojourn there.

Verse 21

כל אלמנה ויתום לא תענון YOU SHALL NOT AFFLICT ANY WIDOW, OR FATHERLESS CHILD — That is also the law regarding any person, but Scripture is speaking of what usually happens and therefore mentions these in particular, for they are feeble in defensive power (i. e. they have no one to protect them) and it is a frequent occurrence for people to afflict them (Mekhilta).

Verse 22

אם ענה תענה אתו IF THOU AFFLICT THEM IN ANY WISE — This is an elliptical phrase — the text threatens but breaks off and does not specify immediately the punishment which will fall upon those who do this. We

have the same in, (Genesis 4:15) "Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain …" it threatens but does not specify the punishment. So, here, too: "If thou afflict them in any wise", — this is a threat, as much as to say: "in the end you will get your deserts!" Why are you certain to get them? "Because (כי) if (אם) they cry at all unto Me, I will surely hear their cry".

Verse 23

והיו נשיכם אלמנות AND YOUR WIVES SHALL BE WIDOWS [AND YOUR CHILDREN FATHERLESS] — From what is implied in the words, "I will kill you with the sword" do I not know that "your wives shall be widows and your children orphans"? But the explanation of the latter words is not that implied by your question; it is quite a different curse: that the wives will be "fettered" for life — "as living widows" (Rashi is imitating a Biblical phrase, II Samuel 20:3, used in a somewhat similar sense) — that there will be no witnesses who can testify to the death of their husbands, and so they will be forbidden to re-marry. In which case the children will be destitute orphans, for the court will not allow them to take possession of the chattels of their fathers, since they do not know whether they have died or have only been taken captives (Mekhilta; Bava Metzia 38b).

Verse 24

אם כסף תלוה את עמי IF THOU LEND MONEY TO ANY OF MY PEOPLE — R. Yishmael said: wherever אם occurs in Scripture it is used of an act the performance of which is optional, except in three instances, of which this is one (Mekhilta; cf. Rashi on Exodus 20:22 - the translation therefore is: "When thou lendeth etc.").
את עמי TO ANY OF MY PEOPLE — If thou hast to choose between lending money to My people and a heathen, My people come first; if between a poor man and one who is better off, the poor man comes first; if between thine own poor (poor relatives) and other poor of thy city, thine own poor come first; if between the poor of thine own city and the poor of another city, the poor of thine own city come first (Mekhilta; Bava Metzia 71a). And this is how the above explanation is implied in the text: "If thou lend money" — את עמי "lend it to My people", and not to a heathen; and to which one of My people? את העני, to the poor; and to which poor? עמך to him that is with thee (i. e. who is with thee in relationship and is with thee in thy city). [Another explanation of את עמי is: Thou shalt not treat him disrespectfully when lending him money, for he is עמי — though in need he is still "My people"!
את העני עמך Look at thyself as though thou art the poor man (Midrash Tanchuma 6:15)].
לא תהיה לו כנשה THOU SHALT NOT BE UNTO HIM AS AN EXACTOR — you shall not demand the debt of him forcibly. The comparative כ of כנשה suggests thou shalt not be like a נשה: if you know that he has no money do not appear in your attitude towards him as though you had lent him, but as though you had not lent him — it means as much as, do not humble him.
נשך is what is called in Rabbinical Hebrew רבית (from רבה to increase). It is called נשך "biting", because it resembles the bite of a snake: it bites, inflicting a small wound in a person's foot which he does not feel at first, but all at once it swells and distends the whole body up to the top of his head. So it is with interest: at first one does not feel the drain it makes on him and it remains unnoticed until the interest mounts up and suddenly makes the person lose a big fortune (Exodus Rabbah 31:6).

Verse 25

אם חבל תחבל IF THOU TAKE TO PLEDGE — The root חבל never signifies "taking a pledge" at the time when the loan is transacted, but it means taking the goods of the debtor when the date of payment arrives and he does not pay (Bava Metzia 114b). [חבל תחבל — Scripture bids you take the pledge repeatedly — even many times (that is, repeatedly to defer the time of payment). The Holy One, blessed be He, says as it were: "How much do you owe Me! See, your soul ascends night by night to Me and renders account of its doing and so becomes My debtor, and should be kept as a pledge; and yet I return it to you every morning. Thus, too, you should do: take the pledge and restore it, take it again and again restore it!") (Midrash Tanchuma, Mishpatim 16)].
עד בא השמש תשיבנו לו RESTORE IT UNTO HIM TILL THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN — Restore it unto him for the whole day until the sun-set, and at night-fall you may take it again till the day-break of the next morning. Scripture speaks here of garment which is worn during the day and which is not required during the night (Bava Metzia 114b).

Verse 26

כי הוא כסותה FOR THAT IS HIS RAIMENT — i. e. his upper garment;
שמלתו means HIS SHIRT (the שמלה for the skin);
במה ישכב WHEREIN SHALL HE LIE DOWN — These words are used to include amongst the articles which must be returned to him during the day the couch and its coverings on which he rests during day-time (Mekhilta).

Verse 27

אלהים לא תקלל THOU SHALT NOT EXECRATE GOD — Here you have the prohibition of blasphemy (the penalty being stated in Leviticus 24:16) and the prohibition of cursing a judge (who is also termed אלהים, cf. Exodus 22:7) (cf. (Mekhilta and Sanhedrin 66a).

Verse 28

מלאתך [THOU SHALT NOT DELAY TO OFFER FROM] THY FULLNESS — The duty which falls upon you as soon as your crop becomes fully ripened: this refers to the first fruits (בכורים).
ודמעך means THE HEAVE OFFERING, — thus do our Rabbis explain it (cf. Mekhilta), but I do not know what the expression דמע means (i. e. I do not know how it comes to have the meaning of (תרומה).
לא תאחר THOU SHALT NOT DELAY — i. e. thou shalt not alter the prescribed sequence of separating them from the crops, setting aside last what should be first and setting aside first what should be last — i. e. that one should not set aside the heave-offering before the first fruit nor the tithe before the heave-offering (Mekhilta).
בכור בניך תתן לי THE FIRST BORN OF THY SONS SHALT THOU GIVE UNTO ME — by redeeming him from the priest by the payment of five Sela'im. Scripture, it is true, has already given an ordinance concerning him (the firstborn) in another passage (Numbers 18:16), but it is stated here again in order to bring it into juxtaposition with the next verse: "Likewise shalt thou do with that of thine ox", and to illustrate the latter command by the former. How is it in the case of a human being? He (the father) redeems it after thirty days, for it is said, (Numbers 18:16) "and those that are to be redeemed, from a month old shalt thou redeem"! So, too, has the owner of small cattle to look after it for 30 days and only afterwards must he give it to the priest (cf. Mekhilta and Bekhorot 26b).

Verse 29

שבעת ימים יהיה עם אמו SEVEN DAYS IT SHALL BE WITH ITS DAM — This is an admonition for the priest (for the Israelite himself does not sacrifice the firstborn animal) that if he wishes to bring his offering of this at an earlier date (i.e. in the case of the Israelite having given it to him before the thirtieth or fiftieth day) he is not allowed to offer it before it is eight days old because it is then "short in time" (i. e. too young for sacrifice; cf. Leviticus 22:27).
ביום השמיני תתנו לי ON THE EIGHTH DAY THOU SHALT GIVE IT ME — One might think that it is obligatory to offer it on that day! Scripture, however, uses here the words "eighth day" and uses them again later on, (Leviticus 22:27) "and from the eighth day and henceforth it shall be favourably accepted", in order to suggest an analogy. Now what is the meaning of the "eighth day" mentioned in the latter passage? It intends to declare the first-born fit for sacrifice from the eighth day and henceforth (i. e. it is intended to fix the earliest possible time on which it may be sacrificed). This, too, in the purpose of the word שמיני used here: to declare it fit for sacrifice from the eighth day and henceforth. The text therefore implies: "on the eighth day thou mayest give it to Me" (and not "thou shalt give it to Me") (Mekhilta).

Verse 30

ואנשי קדש תהיון לי AND YE SHALL BE MEN OF HOLINESS UNTO ME — If you will be holy and keep yourselves aloof from the loathsomeness of carrion and Trefa you are Mine, if not you are not Mine (cf. Mekhilta).
ובשר בשדה טרפה [NEITHER SHALL YE EAT] ANY FLESH THAT IS TORN IN THE FIELD – The same holds good in case the animal has been torn in the house, only that Scripture speaks of what usually happens mentioning the field because it is the place where it is usual for cattle to be torn. A similar instance is, (Deuteronomy 22:27) "for he found her in the field", but the same law would apply if he found her elsewhere. Another example is, (Deuteronomy 23:11) "Any man that is unclean by reason of uncleanliness that chanceth him by night"; the same law, however, applies to an uncleanliness that happens by day, but night is mentioned because Scripture speaks of what usually happens (Mekhilta). The Targum renders ובשר בשדה טרפה by ובשר תליש מן חיוא חיא "flesh that is torn off from a living animal", i. e. flesh that has been torn off through a laceration caused by a wolf or a lion, from a living beast which is permitted to be eaten (e. g., a stag), or from cattle permitted to be eaten.
לכלב תשלכון אתו YE SHALL CAST IT TO THE DOGS — You may give it to a heathen as well as to the dog. Or, perhaps this is not so, but כלב is to be taken literally? Scripture, however, states with regard to carrion, (Deuteronomy 14:21) "Thou shalt give it to a stranger or sell it unto an alien", from which it follows by a conclusion à fortiori that you may derive whatever benefit you like from the Trefa (and so you also may give it to heathen). But if this be so, what is the force of Scripture expressly saying "to the dog"? It is to teach you that the dog is to be given preference in this respect and Scripture tells you at the same time that God does not withhold the reward due to any of His creatures. The dog is entitled to reward because it is stated, (Exodus 11:7) "But against the children of Israel shall not a dog move its tongue", and this happened. The Holy One, blessed be He, said: Give it the reward it deserves (Mekhilta).

Chapter 23

Verse 1

לא תשא שמע שוא THOU SHALT NOT HEAR A FALSE REPORT — Take it as the Targum renders it: thou shalt not accept (listen to) a false report. This is a prohibition addressed to one who is about to accept a slanderous statement, and it is addressed also to a judge — that he should not hear the pleadings of one party to a suit before the other appears (Mekhilta; Sanhedrin 7b).
אל תשת ידך עם רשע SET NOT THINE HAND WITH THE WICKED — with him who makes a false claim against his fellow-man: that you promise him to give evidence for him that will result in wrong being done (להיות עד חמס).

Verse 2

לא תהיה אחרי רבים לרעת THOU SHALT NOT FOLLOW THE MANY FOR EVIL — There are Halachic interpretations of this verse given by the Sages of Israel but the wording of the text does not fit in well with them. They derive from here that we must not decide a person's guilt by a preponderance of one judge. And the end of the verse they explained thus: אחרי רבים להטות — but if the judges who declare the defendant guilty are two more than those who declare him innocent, then decide the matter as they declare — that he is guilty (Sanhedrin 2a). — The verse, they point out, speaks of capital cases. — The middle passage לא תענה על רב, they explained as though it were written רַב על, "thou shalt not speak against the chief of the judges, meaning that one should not give an opinion different from that given by the מופלא of the court (the most eminent among the judges, because this is disrespectful to the Presiding-judge). In consequence of this rule we begin to take the view of those in the side-benches first — we ask the youngest judges to express their opinion first (so that they may not be able to vote against the view expressed by the מופלא). Therefore the exegesis of the verse according to the words of our Rabbis is as follows: "thou shalt not follow a bare majority for evil" — to sentence a man to death on account of the one judge by whom those who condemn him are more in number than those who acquit him; "and thou shalt not speak against the chief inclining away" from his opinion. — They explained this latter phrase thus, because the word which is usually written רִיב is here written without and therefore may be read, אחרי רבים להטות, there is, however, a majority to whose view thou must incline. When is this the case? When there are two who preponderate amongst those who vote for condemnation over and above those who vote for acquittal. For from what is implied in, "thou shalt not follow a bare majority for evil", I may infer: but thou shall follow it for good. Hence they (the Rabbis) said (i. e. they established the general rule): In capital cases we may decide by a majority of one for acquittal, but only by a majority of at least two to condemn. Onkelos translates the second phrase by: Do not refrain from teaching when you are being asked your opinion in a legal matter. The Hebrew text is to be explained according to the Targum as follows: לא תענה על רב לנטת If you are being asked your opinion in a legal matter do not give your answer just to incline to one particular side and so to withdraw yourself from the dispute, but decide the matter as truth requires. Such are the expositions that have been offered of this verse.
But I think that if one wishes to explain the verse so that every thing should fit in properly, its exegesis must be as follows: לא תהיה אחרי רבים לרעת, If you see wicked men wresting judgment do not say: since they are many I will incline after them;
ולא תענה על רב לנטת וגו׳, and if the defendant asks you about that judgment do not give him as a reply concerning the dispute any statement which will incline after that majority, thereby wresting judgment from the truth, but pronounce the decision just as it should be and let the collar hang around the neck of the majority (i. e. if you be outvoted let them bear the responsibility).

Verse 3

לא תהדר NEITHER SHALT THOU COUNTENANCE [THE INDIGENT IN HIS QUARREL] — You shall not pay regard to him by finding in his favour in the law suit, saying, "He is a poor man; I will find in his favour, and thus show him some measure of respect."

Verse 4

Verse 5

כי תראה חמור שנאך וגו׳ IF THOU SEE THE ASS OF HIM THAT HATETH THEE etc. — כי here has the meaning of "possibly", "perhaps", which is one of the four meanings which the word כי serves to express. The sense of the verse is accordingly the following: Can you possibly see his ass crouching beneath his burden and forbear to help him? (The Hebrew word בתמיה in Rashi means "Say this in the intonation of a question", and is nothing more than our question mark).
עזב תעזב עמו — The root עזב has here the meaning of "helping". It has a similar meaning in, (Deuteronomy 32:36) "assisted and helped (עזוב)". Similar also is, (Nehemiah 3:8) "ויעזבו Jerusalem up to the wall" — i. e. they filled it up with earth in order to help and to support the strength of the wall. A similar use of כי is, (Deuteronomy 7:17, 18) כי תאמר בלבבך רבים הגוים האלה וגו׳ which means "Canst thou possibly (כי) speak thus? לא תירא מהם, Do not be afraid of them and speak thus". Our Rabbis expounded it in a Halachic sense as follows: … כי תראה וחדלת "If thou seest etc. …וחדלת" — there are occasions when you may forbear and there are occasions when you must help. How so? If it is an old man who sees the ass in this condition and it is not compatible with his dignity to intervene, then וחדלת "thou mayest forbear" holds good; or if the animal belongs to a heathen and its burden to an Israelite then, also, וחדלת may be applied (cf. Mekhilta).
עזב תעזב עמו THOU SHALT SURELY HELP HIM — to unload the burden (Mekhilta). Onkelos also translates it in this sense: מלמשקל ליה which means, [Thou shalt not keep back] from taking the load from off it.

Verse 6

אבינך — from the root אבה "to long for", "to desire" — one who is poverty-stricken and longs for all the good things which he lacks.

Verse 7

ונקי וצדיק אל תהרג AND THE GUILTLESS AND RIGHTEOUS SLAY THOU NOT — Whence may we infer that in the case that one who left the court after being found guilty and one says, "I have something to plead in his favour", he has to be brought back in order that the court may listen to this? From what Scripture states, "and the נקי thou shalt not slay". Although he is not a צדיק — for he has not been acquitted by the court — he is however "free" (נקי) from the death penalty, for it is your duty to plead — as far as possible — in his favour. And whence may we infer, on the other hand, that in the case of one who left the court after having been acquitted and one says, "I have something to say against him" he is not to be brought back that the judges may hear this? From what Scripture states: "and the צדיק slay thou not" — and this man is a צדיק since he has been acquitted by the court (Sanhedrin 33b).

כי לא אצדיק רשע FOR "I" WILL NOT JUSTIFY THE WICKED — It is not your duty, in the latter case, to bring the man back to the court, for if he is really guilty, "I" will not acquit him in My court. Altough he has left your hands as innocent "I" have many agents (many means) to inflict upon him the death to which he has made himself liable (Mekhilta).

Verse 8

ושחד לא תקח AND THOU SHALT TAKE NO GIFT, even if you mean to give a true judgment in favour of the giver, and it is a matter of course that you must not accept one to wrest judgment, and therefore there is no need for Scripture to forbid this, for with regard to wresting judgment, whether you take a bribe or not, it is distinctly stated, (Deuteronomy 16:19) "Thou shalt not wrest judgment" (Ketubot 105a).
יעור פקחים [FOR THE BRIBE] BLINDETH THE OPEN-EYED — Even if he be well-versed in the Torah and takes a bribe, in the end his mind will become confused, what he has learnt will be forgotten, and the light of his eyes will become dim (Mekhilta; Ketubot 105a).
ויסלף — render it as the Targum does: ויקלקל "makes bad", "perverts".... דברי צדיקים means, the words which have been described by the term "righteous", viz., the judgments of truth uttered on Sinai. Thus, too, does the Targum take it: words that are תריצין, upright.

Verse 9

וגר לא תלחץ AND THOU SHALT NOT OPPRESS THE STRANGER — In numerous passages (36 in number) does the Torah offer a caution about the ill-treatment of the stranger, because his original character is bad (Bava Metzia 59b).
אתם נפש הגר [FOR YE KNOW] THE SOUL OF A STRANGER — how hard it is for him when people oppress him.

Verse 10

ואספת את תבואתה AND SHALT GATHER IN THE INCREASE THEREOF — אסף is a term denoting "bringing into the house", like, (Deuteronomy 22:2) "thou shalt gather it (ואספתו) into thine house" (cf. Rashi on Genesis 49:29).

Verse 11

תשמטנה THOU SHALT LET IT REST — by not tilling it (Mekhilta),
ונטשתה AND THOU SHALT ABANDON IT — by not eating of its produce (Mekhilta) after "the time of removal" of the produce has arrived. Another explanation is: תשמטנה THOU SHALT LET IT REST, from what is real work, as, for example, ploughing and sowing, ונטשתה AND LEAVE IT ALONE — not even to manure and to hoe it.
ויתרם תאכל חית השדה AND WHAT THEY LEAVE THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD (the wild animals) SHALL EAT — This cannot be a command that the wild animals shall eat it, viz., that you shall permit them to eat it. No such command is necessary since you have no control over wild animals; it intends by juxtaposition with the preceding words to place in the same category (more lit., to compare) the food of the poor with that of the beast. For how is it in the case of the wild animal? It eats food without the tithe having been separated from it! So too, the poor may in the seventh year eat food without the tithe having been separated from it. From this juxtaposition they (the Rabbis) derived the rule that the law of tithe is not to be observed in the seventh year (Mekhilta).
כך תעשה לכרמך IN LIKE MANNER THOU SHALT DO WITH THY VINEYARD — The first member of the verse, however, speaks of a "white field" (i. e. a bright, shadeless field — a grain field or a vegetable field — in contrast to a

שדה אילן which casts shade), as it is said above, (v. 10) "thou shalt sow thy land".

Verse 12

וביום השביעי תשבת [SIX DAYS SHALT THOU DO THY WORK] AND ON THE SEVENTH DAY THOU SHALT LEAVE OFF — Even in the Sabbatical year you shall not abrogate the weekly Sabbath: you shall not say, "Since the whole year bears the name of 'Sabbath', the weekly Sabbath need not to be observed" (Mekhilta).
למען ינוח שורך means, give it (the animal) some satisfaction (נוח) by permitting it to pull up and eat grass from the ground as it pleases. Or, perhaps, this is not the meaning but it means that is must rest: that one must tie it up in its stall so that it does no work in the field! You will, however, admit this is no satisfaction but a source of annoyance (Mekhilta).
בן אמתך THE SON OF THY HANDMAID — Scripture speaks of an uncircumcised Canaanitish servant; (that the circumcised servant should rest is already mentioned in Deuteronomy 5:14: עבדך ואמתך כמוך) (cf. Mekhilta).
והגר means a גר תושב, a proselyte settler (one who renounces idolatry and thus acquires limited citizenship in Palestine).

Verse 13

ובכל אשר אמרתי אליכם תשמרו AND IN ALL THAT I HAVE SAID TO YOU TAKE HEED — This statement is intended to bring every positive command (מצות עשה) also under the category of a prohibition (לאו); for wherever the term שמר, "take heed", is used in the Torah it is an admonition in the place of (having the force of) a prohibition (cf. Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 355).
לא תזכירו MAKE NO MENTION [OF THE NAME OF OTHER GODS] — This means that one must not say to another: "Wait for me near such-and-such an idol", or, "Stay with me on the festival of such-an-such an idol'" (mentioning its name) (cf. Mekhilta; Sanhedrin 63b). Another explanation of verse 13 is: the juxtaposition of "Be heedful in respect of everything that I have spoken to you" with "and the names of other gods ye shall not mention" is intended to teach you that the practise of idol-worship is of equal heinousness as though one had infringed every command (cf. Horayot 8a); and that one who avoids it may be regarded as though he had observed every one of them (cf. Chullin 5a).
לא ישמע IT SHALL NOT BE HEARD from a heathen, THROUGH THINE AGENCY — i. e. you shall make no business partnership with a heathen through which it might happen that he will take an oath by the name of his god, for consequently you will have brought it about that it has been mentioned through your agency (cf. Sanhedrin 63b).

Verse 14

רגלים means TIMES. Similar is, (Numbers 22:28) "that thou hast smitten me these three times (רגלים)".

Verse 15

חודש האביב THE MONTH OF אביב — it is the month when the grain becomes full in its ripe state (באביה). The word אביב is connected with אָב which signifies maturity, and being the first of the fruit to ripen (cf. Rashi on Exodus 9:31).
ולא יראו פני ריקם AND NONE SHALL APPEAR BEFORE MY FACE EMPTY — When you come to appear before My face on the festivals, bring Me burnt-offerings (Mekhilta; Chagigah 7a).

Verse 16

וחג הקציר AND THE FESTIVAL OF HARVEST — this is the Feast of Weeks, בכורי מעשיך which is the time for bringing the first-fruits, for the offering of the two loaves that were brought on the Feast of Weeks made it permissible for the first time during the year to use the new harvest of wheat for the meal offerings (Menachot 68b), and to bring the first fruits into the Temple, (Mishnah Bikkurim 1:3) for it is said, (Numbers 28:26) "And on the day of the first fruits etc., [בשבעתיכם on your weeks etc.]" (cf. Rashi on that verse).
וחג האסף AND THE FESTIVAL OF THE INGATHERING — that is the Feast of Tabernacles.
באספך את מעשיך WHEN THOU HAST GATHERED IN THY LABOURS — For during the whole summer-time the fruits are drying in the fields and about the Festival (חָג is a Talmudical term for the Feast of Tabernacles) they are gathered into the barns on account of the rain that is then due.

Verse 17

שלש פעמים וגו׳ THREE TIMES etc. — Because this section speaks mainly of the Sabbatical year, it was necessary to state that the sequence of the festivals should not be disturbed even in this year of agricultural rest (Mekhilta; cf. Rashi on v. 12).
כל זכורך means all the male population among you.

Verse 18

לא תזבח על חמץ וגו׳ means, you shall not sacrifice the Passover-lamb on the fourteenth day of Nisan before you have removed the leavened bread from your house (Mekhilta). (This verse is to be connected with v. 15).
ולא ילין חלב חגי NEITHER SHALL THE FAT OF MY SACRIFICE REMAIN away from the altar (cf. the Targum).
UNTIL MORNING. One might think, however, that the meaning is, that it shall not remain overnight on the altar and that the sacrifice would therefore become invalid even through the fat remaining overnight on the "wood-pile" of the altar! Scripture, however, states, (Leviticus 6:2) "[This is the law of the burnt-offering; it is that which may go up] on the fire-place of the altar all the night, [any time until the morning]"(Mekhilta), —
Therefore the statement ולא ילין means, that this law of leaving the fat away from the altar overnight is infringed only if it has not been placed on the altar by the dawn of the morning, for it says, "[neither shall the fat remain] until morning", but any time during the whole night one may lift it up from the pavement on to the altar (cf. Megillah 20b).

Verse 19

ראשית בכורי אדמתך THE FIRST OF THE FIRST-FRUITS OF THY GROUND [THOU SHALT BRING etc.] — Even in the seventh year the offering of the first fruits is obligatory in some cases, therefore here also (where Scripture mainly deals with the laws of the Sabbatical year) it is stated: "the first of the first-fruits of thy land [shalt thou bring, etc.]". How was the procedure at the setting apart of the first fruits? A man goes into his field and sees a fig which was the first to ripen; he ties a piece of reed-grass round it to distinguish it and so marks its sacred character (Mishnah Bikkurim 3:1). The law of the first fruits applies only to the seven kinds of produce that are mentioned in Scripture: (Deuteronomy 8:8) "a land of wheat and barley etc.", for which Palestine is praised in that verse (Mishnah Bikkurim 3:1).

לא תבשל גדי THOU SHALT NOT COOK A KID — A calf and a lamb also are comprehended under the term גדי, for גדי means nothing more than a young tender animal, as you may gather from the fact that you will find in several passages in the Torah that the term גדי is used and that the writer felt it necessary specially to explain it by adding after it the word עזים, as, e. g., (Genesis 38:17) "I will send forth a גדי of the goats"; (Genesis 38: 20) "the גדי of the goats"; (Genesis 27:9) "two kids of the goats (גדיי עזים)". This fact serves to show you that wherever גדי is mentioned without further description the term implies also a calf and a lamb. — In three different passages the law לא תבשל גדי is written: once for the purpose of prohibiting the eating of meat-food with milk-food, once to prohibit us from deriving any other benefit (besides eating) from such mixture, and once to prohibit the boiling of meat with milk (Mekhilta; Chullin 115b).

Verse 20

הנה אנכי שלח מלאך BEHOLD, I SEND A MESSENGER [BEFORE THEE] — Here they were informed that they would once sin and that the Divine Majesty would have to tell them, (Exodus 33:3) "for 'I' will not go up among thee" (cf. Exodus Rabbah 32:3).
אשר הכנתי means, WHICH I HAVE PREPARED in order to give unto you. This is the literal meaning of the verse. The Midrash (taking the word as connected in meaning with the term כְּוֵן "to put a thing in a line with" or "to make it correspond with" another thing) explains אל המקום אשר הכנתי to signify "to the place opposite to which I have long since established the seat of my Glory" ("the place" therefore denotes the Temple; cf. Rashi on Exodus 15:17). This is, according to the Midrash, one of the verses which implicitly state that the Temple in Heaven is situated exactly opposite (מְכֻוָּן) that on the earth (Midrash Tanchuma, Mishpatim 18)

Verse 21

אל תמר בו EXASPERATE HIM NOT — This verb is a term denoting rebellion (המראה), similar to, (Joshua 1:18) "Whosoever he be that rebel (ימרה) against thy commandment".
כי לא ישא לפשעכם FOR HE WILL NOT PARDON YOUR TRESPASS — He is not accustomed to it (to sin) for he is one of a class of beings who never sin. Besides he is only a messenger and only carries out the mission entrusted to him (i. e. he has no right to pardon you, for this is My prerogative: it is his only to insist upon obedience to My commands) (Midrash Tanchuma, Mishpatim 18).
כי שמי בקרבו FOR MY NAME IS IN HIM — This passage must be connected with the beginning of the verse: Take heed of him etc. — for (כי) My Name is associated with his (i. e. whatever he does, he does in My Name). Our Rabbis said that he (the angel) is Mattatron (מטטרון) whose name is even as the name of his Master, for מטטרון has the numerical value of שדי "the Almighty" (Sanhedrin 38b).

Verse 22

וצרתי — render this as the Targum does: I will distress.

Verse 23

Verse 24

הרס תהרסם [BUT] THOU SHALT UTTERLY OVERTHROW THEM — those gods.
מצבתיהם THEIR MONUMENTS — stones which they set up (root נצב) before which to prostrate themselves.

Verse 25

Verse 26

לא תהיה משכלה THERE SHALL NOTHING BE BEREAVED OF YOUNG, if you will act according to My will.
משכלה BEREAVED OF YOUNG — A woman who miscarries or who buries her children at a very early age is called משכלה.

Verse 27

והמתי I WILL CONFOUND — This is equivalent to וְהָמַמְתִּי (i. e. the root is המם). Its rendering in the Targum is ואשנש "and I will confound". Similar is every verb the root of which has its last letter doubled (verbs ע"ע): when it is changed (conjugated) to express the idea of "I have done something" (i. e. the first person singular perfect of the Kal; the same really applies to some inflected forms of other conjugations also) there are occasions when one omits the doubled letter (it is actually the first of the two similar letters) and dageshes the remaining letter of these two and vowels it with מלאפום (our חולם). Examples are: וְהַמֹּתִי which is of the same derivation as, (Isaiah 28:28) "and the wheel of his cart makes a confused noise (המם)"; (Ecclesiastes 2:20) וְסַבֹּתִי, "and I turned about" which is of the same derivation as, (I Samuel 7:16) "and he went round (וסבב) to Bethel"; (Psalms 116:6) דַּלֹּתִי "I was low", of the same derivation as, (Isaiah 19:6) "The waters shall become low (דללו) and dried up"; (Isaiah 49:16) "I have graven thee (חֲקֹתִיךְ) upon the palms of my hand", of the same derivation as, (Judges 5:15) "things engraved (חקקי) in the heart"; (I Samuel 12:3) את מי רַצֹּתִי "whom have I crushed", of the same derivation as, (Job 20:19) "because he hath crushed (רצץ) and hath forsaken the poor". He, however, who translates it in the Targum by וְאֶקָּטֵל, is in error. For if it were derived from the root denoting death (מות), the ה in it would not be vowelled with Patach and its מ would not be dageshed nor vowelled with חולם, but it would read וְהַמֹתִי, as, (Numbers 14:15) "Now if Thou shalt kill (וְהַמַתָּ) this people", the ת being dageshed because it would come in place of two ת's, one being a root-letter — for no form of מות can be written without at least one ת (that in the root) — and the other being a servile letter (part of the suffix), just as תִּי in אמר-תי and חמא-תי and עשי-תי. Similarly with נתתי: the second ת is dageshed because it comes in the place of two ת's — since it (the word) really requires three ת's, two for the root, as in, (Joshua 10:12) "the day when the Lord giveth (תת)", and in, (Ecclesiastes 3:13) "it is the gift (מתת) of God", — and the third as a servile letter.
ערף NAPE OF THE NECK — i. e. they will flee before you and so turn the napes of their necks to you.

Verse 28

הצרעה THE HORNETS — This is a kind of insect which wounded their eyes and injected poison in them, so that they died. The hornets did not cross the Jordan and the Hittite and the Canaanite whom Scripture mentions here as being driven out by them were the inhabitants of the land of Sichon and Og (on the east side of the Jordan). It is for this reason that Scripture enumerates here of all the seven nations that Israel fought against when entering Palestine only these two (cf. Joshua 24:12, where the text

expressly states that the peoples driven out by the hornets were those of שני מלכי האמרי, "of the two kings of the Amorites" who are identical with Sihon and Og). But the Hivites lived on the other bank of the Jordan and somewhat beyond it and yet it states here that the hornets would drive them out! They were indeed driven out by the hornets, for our Rabbis have explained in Treatise Sotah 36a that the hornets placed themselves on the east bank of the Jordan and from there cast the poison against them.

Verse 29

שממה DESOLATE — empty of human beings, for you are but few and not sufficient to fill it all up.
ורבה עליך means, [LEST THE ANIMALS OF THE FIELD] MULTIPLY AGAINST THEE.

Verse 30

עד אשר תפרה UNTIL THOU BE FRUITFUL — i. e. until you become many. תפרה is of the same root and meaning as no fruit, as, (Genesis 1:28) פרו ורבו "be fruitful and multiply".

Verse 31

ושתי is of the root שית or שות. The ת is dageshed, because it comes in place of two ת's (ושת-תי) — one is necessary because no grammatical form of שות can be without the ת of the root, and the other is a servile letter (part of the suffix).
עד הנהר UNTO THE RIVER — the Euphrates.
וגרשתמו means AND THOU SHALT DRIVE THEM OUT.

Verse 32

Verse 33

כי תעבד וגו׳ FOR IF THOU SERVE etc. — Both particles כי in this verse have the meaning of אשר "that". It has this meaning in several passages. This is really the sense of the Aramaic word אי (Hebrew אם) which itself is one of the four meanings in which כי is used (cf. Gittin 90a. where the four usages of כי are given). In fact we find אם (אי) used in many passages in the sense of אשר, e. g., (Leviticus 2:14) ואם תקריב where it certainly should not be translated "if" — but "when thou offer an offering of thy first-fruits", for this offering is not optional but is obligatory (cf. Rashi on that verse).

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Chapter 24

Verse 1

ואל משה אמר AND UNTO MOSES HE SAID — This section was spoken before the Ten Commandments were given (i. e. אמר is the pluperfect); it was the fourth of Sivan when "Come up" was said to him (Shabbat 88a).

Verse 2

ונגש משה לבדו AND MOSES ALONE SHALL STEP NEAR unto the thick darkness (cf. Exodus 20:18).

Verse 3

ויבא משה ויספר לעם AND MOSES CAME AND RELATED TO THE PEOPLE — on that same day (the 4th of Sivan).
את כל דברי ה׳ ALL THE WORDS OF THE LORD — the commands concerning their keeping apart from women and the setting of bounds at Mount Sinai.
ואת כל המשפטים AND ALL THE JUDGMENTS which had been ordained before the Sinaitic legislation: the seven commands given to the "Sons of Noah" (the non-Israelite world), the law of the Sabbath, of filial respect, of the "red heifer" and regarding the administration of justice, all of which had been given to them already in Marah (cf. Sanhedrin 56b).

Verse 4

ויכתב משה AND MOSES WROTE [ALL THE WORDS OF THE LORD] — from בראשית up to (but not including) the account of the Giving of the Torah and he wrote

down the commandments that were given to them in Marah (cf. Mekhilta on Exodus 19:10).
וישכם בבקר AND ROSE UP EARLY IN THE MORNING — on the fifth of Sivan (cf. Rashi on Exodus 19:11) (Shabbat 88a).

Verse 5

את נערי THE LADS — the first-born sons (Zevachim 115b; Onkelos).

Verse 6

ויקח משה חצי הדם AND MOSES TOOK THE HALF OF THE BLOOD — Who divided it into halves? An angel came down and divided it (Leviticus Rabbah 6:5).
באגנת IN BASONS — There were two basons, one for holding the half of the blood of the burnt offering and the other for holding the half of the blood of the peace offerings, in order to sprinkle it (both bloods) on the people. From here have our Rabbis inferred (Keritot 9a) that our ancestors entered into the covenant with God by means of circumcision, immersion and sprinkling of blood — and although immersion is not mentioned in this paragraph it must have taken place, for no sprinkling is effective without immersion preceding it (cf. Tosafot Yevamot 46b ד"ה דאין הזאה בלא טבילה).

Verse 7

ספר הברית THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT — the book which we have said contained the part of the Torah from בראשית till the "Giving of the Torah" including the Commandments that were given to them at Marah (Mekhilta; cf. Rashi on v. 4).

Verse 8

וירק means sprinkling — he sprinkled it on the people (not he threw it against the people, as this word might imply; cf. e. g., Exodus 9:8: וזרקו משה השמימה). The Targum, however, renders it by: and he poured it (the blood) upon the altar as atonement for (על) the people, adding the words "upon the altar", and taking על העם to denote "on behalf of the people", i. e. he poured it out to atone for the people.

Verse 9

Verse 10

ויראו את אלהי ישראל NOW THEY SAW THE GOD OF ISRAEL — They gazed intently and failing in this they peeped in their attempt to catch a glimpse of the Supreme Being, and thereby made themselves liable to death. But it was only because God did not wish to disturb the joy caused by the Giving of the Torah, that He did not punish them instantly, but waited (postponed the punishment) for Nadab and Abihu until the day when the Tabernacle was dedicated, when they were stricken with death, and for the elders until the event of which the text relates, (Numbers 11:16) "And when the people complained …. and the fire of the Lord burned among them and destroyed בקצה המחנה" — those who were the קצינים "nobles" of the camp (Midrash Tanchuma, Beha'alotcha 16).
כמעשה לבנת הספיר AS IT WERE THE BRICKWORK OF SAPPHIRE — This had been before Him during the period of Egyptian slavery as a symbol of Israel's woes — for they were subjected to do brick-work (cf. Jerusalem Talmud Succah 6:3; Leviticus Rabbah 23:8).

וכעצם השמים לטהר AND AS IT WERE AS THE BODY OF HEAVEN FOR PURITY — This implies that as soon as they (the Israelites) were delivered there was radiance and rejoicing before Him.
וכעצם — Translate it as the Targum does: "as the appearance".
לטהר means FOR BRIGHTNESS AND CLEARNESS.

Verse 11

ואל אצילי AND UPON THE NOBLES — these were Nadab and Abihu and the elders —
לא שלח ידו HE LAID NOT HIS HAND — This implies that they well deserved that God should stretch forth His hand against them (Midrash Tanchuma, Beha'alotcha 16).
ויחזו את האלהים AND THEY BEHELD GOD [AND DID EAT AND DRINK] — They gazed at him intimately as though their association with Him were a matter of eating and drinking. Thus does the Midrash Tanchuma, Beha'alotcha 16 explain it. Onkelos, however, does not translate the passage this way (i. e. he does not take it in a depreciative sense that Nadab and Abihu and the elders acted improperly. His translation is: they beheld God's Glory and rejoiced in their offerings which were accepted as though they were eating and drinking). —
אצילי means "the great men", as, (Isaiah 41:9) "I called thee from the chief men (אציליה) thereof"; (Numbers 11:17) "And he increased (ויאצל) some of the spirit" (cf. Rashi on Numbers 11:17 and Onkelos on 11:25); (Ezekiel 41:8) "six cubits in its size (largeness) (אצילה)".

Verse 12

ויאמר ה' אל משה AND THE LORD SAID TO MOSES — after the Giving of the Law,
עלה אלי ההרה והיה שם COME UP TO ME INTO THE MOUNTAIN AND REMAIN THERE forty days.
את לחת האבן והתורה והמצוה אשר כתבתי להורתם [AND I WILL GIVE THEE] THE TABLETS OF STONE, AND THE LAW, AND THE COMMANDMENT WHICH I HAVE WRITTEN TO TEACH THEM — All the six hundred and thirteen commandments are implicitly contained in the Ten Commandments and may therefore be regarded as having been written on the tablets. Rabbi Saadia specified in the אזהרות which he has composed those commandments which may be associated with each of the Ten Commandments.

Verse 13

ויקם משה ויהושע משרתו AND MOSES ROSE AND HIS MINISTER JOSHUA — I am not sure in what capacity Joshua appears here, but I think that as a disciple he was accompanying the teacher as far as the place where the bounds of the mountain were marked out, whence onward he was not permitted to proceed. From that point ויעל משה MOSES alone ASCENDED אל הר האלהים THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD, whilst Joshua pitched his tent there and stayed there during the whole forty days which Moses spent on the mountain. For thus we find that when Moses came down from the mountain it states, (Exodus 32:17) "and Joshua heard the voice of the people that they shouted" — from which we may infer that he was not with them in the camp.

Verse 14

ואל הזקנים אמר BUT UNTO THE ELDERS HE SAID when he left the camp (אמר in the sequence of verbs which we find here denotes the pluperfect; the translation therefore is: and to the elders he had said).
שבו לנו בזה ABIDE YE HERE FOR US and stay ye with all the other people in the camp so as to be ready to decide his dispute for each man.

חור [AND] HUR — He was the son of Miriam and his father was Caleb the son of Jephunneh, as it is said, (1 Chr. 2:9) "Caleb took unto him Ephrath, who bare him Hur"; and Ephrath is identical with Miriam, as it is stated in Treatise Sotah 11b.
מי בעל דברים HE WHO HAS ANY MATTER TO DO — i. e. he who has any law-suit.

Verse 15

Verse 16

ויכסהו הענן AND THE CLOUD COVERED IT (lit., "him") [SIX DAYS] — Our Rabbis are of different opinions as to what this passage means. Some of them hold that these were the six days from the first of Sivan (until the Feast of Weeks, the day of the Giving of the Law) —
and that the word ויכסהו in the phrase ויכסהו הענן "the cloud covered him" or covered "it" means that it covered the mountain.
ויקרא אל משה ביום השביעי AND HE CALLED UNTO MOSES ON THE SEVENTH DAY of Sivan to utter the Ten Commandments. It is true that Moses and all Israel were standing there but the text states, "He called unto Moses" merely to give special honour to Moses calling him by name. Others, however, say that the passage means: AND THE CLOUD COVERED HIM — Moses, FOR SIX DAYS after the Ten Commandments had been given. These were at the beginning of the forty days which Moses spent on Mount Sinai when he went up to receive the Tablets, and Scripture teaches you that whosoever enters the camp of the Divine Majesty (here the mountain and later on the Holy of Holies) requires separation from others (must live in seclusion) for six days (Yoma 4a).

Verse 17

Verse 18

בתוך הענן INTO THE MIDST OF THE CLOUD — This cloud was thick like smoke and God made a path for Moses through it (Yoma 4b).

Chapter 25

Verse 1

Verse 2

ויקחו לי תרומה THAT THEY TAKE ME A HEAVE OFFERING — "Me" means to the glory of My Name (Midrash Tanchuma, Terumah 1).
תרומה is something set apart (cf. Onkelos); the meaning is: let them set apart from their possessions a voluntary gift in My honour.
ידבנו לבו — The word ידבנו is of the same root as נדבה (the נ in the latter being replaced by the Dagesh in the ד); it is a term denoting "good-will", apaisement in old French (cf. Rashi on Genesis 33:10 and Leviticus 19:5).
תקחו את תרומתי YE SHALL TAKE MY HEAVE OFFERING — Our Rabbis said: the expression תרומה is used here three times, being an allusion to three different heave offerings; one is the heave offering which consisted of a

beka (half a shekel) a head, and of which the sockets were made, as is set forth in the section אלה פקודי (Exodus 39:26-27); another is the heave offering for the altar — a beka a head that was given to the funds (more lit., "the basket", in which collections for communal or charitable purposes were made) from which to purchase the communal sacrifices; (see Rashi on Exodus 30:15) and the other one is that implied in the word תרומתי "My heave offering" and referred to by the word כסף in the next verse — the heave offering for the Tabernacle which was a free-will gift from each individual (Jerusalem Talmud Shekalim 1:1). Thirteen different articles (cf. Tanchuma) that are mentioned in this section were all required either for the work of the Tabernacle (i. e. the construction of the Tabernacle or making the articles contained therein), or for the priests' garments, as you will find when you look closely into the matter.

Verse 3

זהב וכסף ונחשת וגו׳ GOLD AND SILVER AND COPPER etc. — All these came (were brought) as voluntary gifts, each man giving as his heart prompted him, except that silver which was brought by all in equal quantities (cf. Rashi above), a half shekel by each person. For we do not find in the account of the entire work connected with the Tabernacle that any silver was needed for the work there described in detail over and above this, for it is said, (Exodus 38:25-26) "And the silver of them who were numbered of the congregation [was an hundred talents, etc.] … a beka for every man etc." and vv. 27 and 28 inform us that of this silver were made the Sockets and the hooks. Of the other silver which came (was brought) there, as a free-will gift they made the holy vessels (lit., vessels for service), and it is this silver that is referred to in this verse and which is stated in the preceding verse as having been brought voluntarily.

Verse 4

ותכלת AND BLUE PURPLE — wool dyed with the blood of the חלזון (a kind of shell-fish), the colour of which was greenish-blue (Menachot 44a).
וארגמן AND RED PURPLE — wool coloured with a kind of dye the name of which is ארגמן
ושש — this is what we call LINEN (Yevamot 4b).
ועזים is GOATS' HAIR; therefore Onkelos translates it by וּמְעַזְיָ which denotes something that comes from the goats — not the goats themselves, for the Aramaic translation of עזים is עִזְיָא.

Verse 5

מאדמים RED — they were dyed red after having been tanned.
תחשים TACHASH was a kind of wild beast. It existed only at that time (when Israel built the Tabernacle). It was multi-coloured and therefore it is translated in the Targum by סטגונה, and it is so translated because it delights (שָׂשׂ) and prides itself in its colours (גונא) (Shabbat 28; Midrash Tanchuma, Terumah 6).
ועצי שטים AND SHITTIM WOOD — But from where did they get this in the wilderness? Rabbi Tanchuma explained it thus: Our father Jacob foresaw by the gift of the Holy Spirit that Israel would once build a Tabernacle in the wilderness: he therefore brought cedars to Egypt and planted them there, and bade his children take these with them when they would leave Egypt (Midrash Tanchuma, Terumah 9; cf. Bereishit Rabbah 94 and Rashi on Exodus 26:15).

Verse 6

שמן למאר OIL FOR THE LIGHT — "clear olive-oil … to make the flame ascend continually").
בשמים לשמן המשחה SPICES FOR THE ANOINTING OIL which was made for the purpose of anointing the vessels of the Tabernacle and the Tabernacle itself in order to sanctify it. For this oil spices were required as is set forth in the section כי תשא (Exodus 30:23 ff.).
ולקטרת הסמים AND FOR INCENSE OF AROMATIC SPICES that were burnt every evening and morning, as is set forth in the section ואתה תצוה (Exodus 30:7). The word קטרת signifies raising vapour (קיטור) and a column of smoke.

Verse 7

אבני שהם ONYX STONES — two were required there for the needs of the "ephod" which is mentioned in ואתה תצוה (Exodus 28:6ff.).
מלאים FOR SETTING (lit., filling in) — Because they made for them (for the stones) settings in gold — a kind of indentation — and they put the stone there (in it) to fill the indentation, they were called "filling-up stones"; the spot where the indentation is (i. e. the hollow spot) is called משבצת "setting".
לאפד ולחשן FOR THE EPHOD AND THE BREASTPLATE respectively: the onyx stones for the ephod and "stones for setting" for the breastplate. Ephod and breastplate are described in ואתה תצוה. They were a kind of ornament worn only by the High-Priest.

Verse 8

ועשו לי מקדש AND LET THEM MAKE ME A SANCTUARY — Let them make to the glory of My Name (cf. Rashi on v. 2) a place of holiness.

Verse 9

ככל אשר אני מראה אותך ACCORDING TO ALL THAT I AM SHOWING THEE here, את תבנית המשכן THE PATTERN OF THE DWELLING. — This verse must be connected with the verse that precedes it, thus: And let them make for Me a sanctuary … according to all that I am showing thee (the words ושכנתי בתוכם being a parenthesis).
וכן תעשו AND SO SHALL YE MAKE IT also in future generations (cf. Sanhedrin 16b); if one of the vessels is lost, or when you make for Me the vessels for the "House of Eternity" (another name for the Temple in Jerusalem), — as e. g., the tables, candlesticks, lavers and stands which Solomon had made — you shall make them after the pattern of these (the vessels of the Tabernacle), If, however, the verse were not to be connected with the preceding one but formed a new statement, Scripture ought not to have written: וכן תעשו "and so shall ye make them" but כן תעשו "so shall ye make them" and then it would be speaking of the making of the tent of meeting and its vessels and not of the vessels of the Temple, and the translation would be: according to all that I am showing you the pattern of the Tabernacle and the pattern of all its vessels, even so shall you make them.

Verse 10

ועשו ארון AND THEY SHALL MAKE AN ARK (ארון) — It is so called because it had the appearance of boxes (ארונות) which people make without feet — in the shape of a chest which is called escrin in old French which rests on its bottom.

Verse 11

מבית ומחוץ תצפנו WITHIN AND WITHOUT SHALT THOU OVERLAY IT — Bezalel made three arks, two of gold and one of wood, each having four walls (sides) and a bottom, being, however, open at the top. He put the wooden ark into the larger golden one and the smaller golden one into that of wood and covered its upper rim (that of the wooden ark) with gold; consequently it can be said that the wooden ark was overlaid with gold within and without (Yoma 72b; Jerusalem Talmud Shekalim 6:1).
זר זהב A BORDER OF GOLD — a crown-like ornament encompassed it (the ark) round about above its rim, for he (Bezalel) made the outer ark which was of gold higher than the inner ones so that it stood up over against the thickness of the cover which was made for it and even somewhat beyond it (Yoma 72b). Now when the cover lay upon the thickness of the sides of the two smaller arks the crown-like ledge rose a little above the entire thickness of the cover. It was a symbol of the "crown of the Torah" which was placed within that ark (Exodus Rabbah 34b).

Verse 12

ויצקת — a term used of casting metal, as the Targum has it.
פעמתיו — Understand this as the Targum renders it: ON ITS CORNERS. It was on the upper corners near to the cover that the rings were placed — two on one side of the ark and two on the other along the breadth of the ark, and the staves were put into them (the rings). The length of the ark thus formed a space of two cubits and a half between one stave and the other so that two men who were carrying the ark could walk with ease between on the same side. Thus is it explained in Treatise Menachot in the section beginning with the words, "Shtei HaLehem" (Menachot 98b).
שתי הלחם ושתי טבעות על צלעו האחת AND TWO RINGS IN THE ONE SIDE OF IT — These are the very four rings spoken of in the beginning of the verse but here Scripture explains to you where they were fixed. This ו of the word ושתי (the first time the word occurs here) is really redundant and the interpretation is as though it read, שתי טבעת (see Note on Exodus 24:12). Since however the ו is there you may make it fit in thus: and two of these rings shall be on the one side of it and two on the other side thereof.
צלעו means THE SIDE OF IT.

Verse 13

בדי means STAVES.

Verse 14

Verse 15

לא יסרו ממנו THEY SHALL NOT DEPART THEREFROM for ever (cf. Yoma 72a).

Verse 16

ונתת אל הארן — It must be explained as though it were written בארון: [AND THOU SHALT PUT] INTO THE ARK,
העדות THE TESTIMONY — the Torah (the Tablets; cf. Rashi on Exodus 40:20) which is a testimony between Me and you that I have ordained the commandments written in it (Midrash Tanchuma, Pekudei 4).

Verse 17

כפרת — A cover for the ark which was made open on top. He laid it upon it, flat like an ordinary slab.
אמתים וחצי ארכה TWO CUBITS AND A HALF SHALL BE THE LENGTH THEREOF, as was the length of the ark, and its (the cover's) breadth was as the breadth of the ark (i. e. of the inner wooden ark, cf. Rashi on v. 11); thus it rested on the thickness of its four walls. Although it does not assign any size for its (the cover's) thickness our Rabbis have explained (applying to it a ש"ג) that the thickness thereof was one handbreadth (Sukkah 5a).

Verse 18

כרבים CHERUBIM — They had the form of a child's face (Sukkah 5b).
מקשה תעשה OF BEATEN WORK SHALT THOU MAKE [THEM] — i. e. thou shalt not make them separately (apart from the actual lid) and join them to the ends of the lid after they have been made, like goldsmith's work which is called in old French souder (English solder) — but lay down a large mass of gold (lit., much gold) when thou beginnest to make the lid and beat upon the middle part of it (the gold) with a hammer or with a mallet, so that its ends will project upward (stand out in relief), and then shape the cherubim out of the projecting edges.
מקשה batediz (beaten work) in old French Similarly we have (Daniel 5:6) "and his knees knocked (נקשן) one against another".
קצות הכפרת means THE EXTREMITIES OF THE COVER.

Verse 19

ועשה כרוב אחד מקצה AND MAKE ONE CHERUB FROM ONE EXTREMITY — In order that you should not say that the preceding verse means two cherubim on each extremity, it was necessary to expressly state: "one cherub from the one extremity and one cherub from the other extremity".
מן הכפרת FROM THE COVER itself, תעשו את הכרבים SHALL YE MAKE THE CHERUBIM — This is the explanation of: (v. 18) "of beaten work shalt thou make them" — that thou shalt make them out of the cover itself and that thou shalt not make them by themselves and afterwards join them to the cover.

Verse 20

פרשי כנפים [AND THE CHERUBIM SHALL] SPREAD THEIR WINGS [ON HIGH] — i. e. that you shall not make their wings touching the body but spreading on high slightly above but almost on the same level with their heads so that the hollow space between the wings and the cover shall be ten handbreadths, as it is explained in Treatise Sukkah 5b.

Verse 21

ואל הארן תתן את העדות AND IN THE ARK THOU SHALT PUT THE TESTIMONY — I do not know why this is repeated for it has already been commanded, (v. 16) "and thou shalt put the Testimony in the ark". One may say that it intends to tell us that whilst the ark is still by itself — i. e. without the cover — he should first put the Testimony into it, and only afterwards should he put the cover on it for the first time. Thus indeed do we find: that when he (Moses) erected the Tabernacle it is stated, (Exodus 40:20) "and he [took and] put the Testimony into the ark", and afterwards it says, "and he put the cover upon the ark above it" (cf. Talmud Yerushalmi Shekalim 6:1).

Verse 22

ונועדתי AND [THERE] I WILL BE MET [BY THEE] — When I shall appoint you a place of meeting to speak to you that place will I appoint as the place of meeting whither I will come to speak to you.
ודברתי אתך מעל הכפרת AND I SHALL SPEAK WITH THEE FROM ABOVE THE COVER — In another passage, however, it says, (Leviticus 1:1) "And God spake unto him out of the appointed tent, saying" — this is that part of the Tabernacle outside the partition veil whilst the ark and the cover were on the other tide of the veil — consequently we have two verses contradicting each other! But there comes a third verse and reconciles them: (Numbers 7:89) "And when Moses came into the appointed tent to speak with Him, he heard the voice speaking unto him from off the covering etc." This verse explains exactly what happened. Moses came into the Tabernacle and as soon as he had passed the entrance a voice fell from heaven to the place on the cover which was between the cherubim, and from there it issued and was heard by Moses in the tent of meeting (outside the Holy of Holies; cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 58 and Rashi on Numbers 7:89).
ואת כל אשר אצוה אותך אל בני ישראל AND OF ALL WHICH I SHALL COMMAND THEE CONCERNING THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL — This ו of the word ואת is redundant and without import; there are many sentences similar to this in Scripture. However if you wish to explain this ו the verse must be interpreted as follows: [I shall speak with thee from above the cover] and that which (ואת) I shall speak to you will be everything I shall command thee concerning the children of Israel.

Verse 23

קמתו THE HEIGHT THEREOF — i. e. the height of its legs together with the thickness of the table-board.

Verse 24

זר זהב A BORDER OF GOLD — a symbol of the royal crown, for the table is an emblem of wealth and greatness, as may be seen from the fact that people speak of one's "royal table" when they wish to state one is exceedingly wealthy (cf. Yoma 72b).

Verse 25

מסגרת — Understand this as the Targum renders it: גדנפא, A RIM. The Sages in Israel are of different opinion as to what this מסגרת signifies. Some say it was on top all the way round the table like the vertical ledge that is on the edges of the table of noble men, whilst others say it was fixed beneath the table from leg to leg on the four sides of the table and that the table-top rested upon that ledge (cf. Menachot 96b and Sukkah 5a).
ועשית זר זהב למסגרתו AND THOU SHALT MAKE A GOLDEN BORDER TO THE RIM THEREOF —This is the same border spoken of above (v. 24), and here it explains to you that it was fixed to the rim.

Verse 26

Verse 27

לעמת המסגרת תהיין הטבעת OVER AGAINST THE RIM SHALL THE RINGS BE — inserted in the legs over against the extremities of the border.
לבתים לבדים FOR PLACES FOR THE STAVES — These rings shall be receptacles in which to put the staves.

לבתים means for the purpose of being (to serve as) receptacles for the staves, as the Targum has it: places for the staves.

Verse 28

ונשא בם — The word ונשא is a passive (Niphal) form; the meaning is: THAT THE TABLE MAY BE BORNE BY THEM.

Verse 29

ועשית קערתיו וכפתיו AND THOU SHALT MAKE THE DISHES THEREOF AND THE SPOONS THEREOF — קערתיו are the forms (moulds) that were made to fit the shape of the bread (Menachot 97a). The bread was shaped like a case broken open as regards two of its sides (two opposite sides of which have been removed; these are what we would call the front and the back). It had a bottom underneath, but no top, and this bottom was turned up on both ends to form, as it were, walls. On this account it was called לחם הפנים, "bread with faces" — because it had faces (surfaces) looking in both directions towards the sides of the House (the Sanctuary). The bread was placed lengthwise across the breadth of the table with its sides standing up exactly in a line with the edge of the table. There were made for it a golden mould and an iron mould: in the iron one it was baked, and when it was taken out from the oven it was put on the golden one until the next day, the Sabbath, when it was arranged on the table (the mould then being removed). This golden mould is here called קערה (Menachot 94a; cf. also Berliner's Rashi 2nd ed. p. 426).
וכפתיו AND ITS SPOONS — ladles (or rather, cups with flat bottoms) in which the incense was put. There were two such vessels for the two handfuls of incense which was put upon the piles in which the loaves were arranged, as it is said, (Leviticus 24:7) "And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each pile".
וקשתיו — These had the form of halves of hollow canes which are split along their length (Menachot 96a). Articles similar to these were made of gold and three of them were set in a row above each loaf so that another loaf (that above it) should rest on top of the "canes"; thus they (these canes) separated one loaf from another so that air could enter between and they would not become mouldy (Menachot 97a). In the Arabic language anything hollow is called קסוא (and this corresponds to the root of this word, which therefore denotes something hollow).
מנקיותיו — It is translated in the Targum by ומכילתיה "and the trestles (supports) thereof" (cf. Menachot 96a). According to him these were attachments to the table like a kind of golden pegs (pillars) standing on the floor and reaching in height far above the table up to the height of the pile of bread. They were notched in five places, one above the other, and the ends of the canes which were between one loaf and another were supported on these notches so that the weight of the upper loaves should not press heavily upon the lower ones in which event these would be broken. The word מכילתיה used by Onkelos as a rendering of מנקיותיו denotes "bearers;" it is of the same root as the verb in (Jeremiah 6:11) "I am weary to bear (הכיל) it." But as for the term מנקיות (which is a Piel of נקה and would denote "cleansers") I do not know how it is applicable to these attachments the purpose of which was not to keep the bread clean but merely to serve as supports for the canes. But there are some of the Jewish Sages who hold that קשתיו (connected with קשה "hard") are the pegs (or pillars) and they are so called because they served to keep it (the loaves) hard and firm, so that it should not break, whilst מנקיותיו are the "canes" which kept the bread clean so that it should not become mouldy. Onkelos, however, who translated מנקיותיו by מכילתיה understood it according to the opinion of him who holds that מנקיות were the supporting pillars (cf. Menachot 97a).

אשר יסך בהן means BY WHICH THEY SHALL BE COVERED. It is of the קשות, the "canes," that the words אשר יסך are said, because these lay over it like a cover and a screen. Thus, too, in another passage (Numbers 4:7) it says, ואת קשות הנסך, "and the קשות for covering;" both words, יסך and הנסך, denote screening and covering.

Verse 30

לחם הפנים SHEW-BREAD (lit., bread of faces) — It was so called because it had "faces" (פנים) as I have explained (v. 29). The number of loaves and the way they were set in piles are fully explained in the Sidrah אמר אל הכהנים (Leviticus 24:5—9).

Verse 31

מקשה תיעשה המנורה OF BEATEN WORK SHALL THE CANDELABRUM BE MADE — i. e. one should not make it of separate pieces nor shall one make its branches or its lamps as separate limb — a kind of work called souder in old French, Engl, to solder, but is was to be made in its entirety of a single mass of gold. He (who made it) beat it with the hammer and cut away with the implements of his craft thus making the branches spread out in this direction and in that (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 61:1).
מקשה — This word is translated in the Targum by נגיד, an expression for "drawing out;" he renders it thus because the parts of the candle-stick were drawn from the lump in this direction and in that by the blow of the hammer. The term מקשה denotes knocking with the hammer — batediz in old French — as the verb in (Daniel 5:6) "and his knees knocked (נקשן) one against another".
תיעשה המנורה [OF BEATEN WORK] SHALL THE CANDELABRUM BE MADE — The passive form used here in contradistinction to the active forms of עשה used throughout this section in connection with the making of the vessels indicates that it shall be made of itself (automatically). Because Moses was puzzled by it (the work of the candlestick), the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, "Cast the talent of gold into fire and it will be made of itself." For this reason it does not say here תַּעֲשֶׂה "thou shalt make" (Midrash Tanchuma, Beha'alotcha 3)
ירכה — the foot (the base) below, which was made in form of a box, three legs coming out from it underneath.
וקנה — ITS SHAFT — its middle branch that rose from the central point of the base vertically upwards. On it was the middle lamp, made in the form of a cup into which to pour the oil and to put the wick.
גביעיה — They were like that kind of goblets which are made of glass and which are long and slender; in old French they are termed maderins (cf. Rashi on Genesis 44:2). These, however, were made of gold and came out as projections from each branch to the number which Scripture enjoins for them. They were on it for embellishment only.
כפתריה ITS KNOBS — These were like apples, globular, projecting all round the middle branch (shaft), such as are made for candlesticks of princely houses (lit., which stand before the princes), and which are called pommeaux in old French, apple-shaped ornaments. Their number is stated in this section — how many knobs projected from it (the middle branch) and how much was left plain between one knob and the other.
ופרחיה AND ITS FLOWERS — Figures were made on it in the shape of flowers.
ממנה יהיו SHALL BE OF THE SAME — All shall be of beaten work coming out of this block-shaped piece: one must not make them separately and then join them on the branches.

Verse 32

יצאים מצדיה [AND SIX BRANCHES] SHALL GO OUT OF ITS SIDE — on each side slantwise extending on high up to the level of the candlestick proper, i. e. of the middle branch. They came out from the middle branch, one above the other — the lowest being the longest, that above it being shorter than it, and the upper one even shorter than that, for the height of their tops was to be the same as the height of the middle branch — the seventh, the central one, from which the other six branches came out.

Verse 33

משקדים — Understand this as the Targum has it, מְצָיָרִין, chased. They were "modelled" in the way that is done on gold and silver vessels, a kind of work called in old French nieller.
שלשה גבעים THREE GOBLETS, projecting from each branch,
כפתור ופרח AND A KNOB AND A FLOWER was also on each branch.

Verse 34

ובמנרה ארבעה גבעים AND IN THE CANDELABRUM SHALL BE FOUR CUPS — i. e, on the body of the candlestick (on the vertical branch), were four goblets, viz., one jutting out from beneath the branches and three above the points from which emerged the branches that went out from its sides.
משקדים כפתריה ופרחיה GOBLETS MODELLED, WITH THEIR KNOBS AND THEIR FLOWERS (or it may be translated also: GOBLETS, MODELLED WITH THEIR KNOBS AND FLOWERS — The word משקדים being separated from the preceding by an אתנחתא seems to belong to the next words, to כפתוריה ופרחיה, but the fact that in the preceding verse it had been used of the goblets only suggests the reading גבינים משקדים. This is one of the five verses in Scripture the syntactical construction of which is undecided: it is not clear whether one should read גבינים משקדים or משקדים כפתריה ופרחיה (Yoma 52b).

Verse 35

וכפתר תחת שני הקנים AND THERE SHALL BE A KNOB UNDER TWO BRANCHES — The branches were drawn out from the two sides of the knob to this direction and to that. Thus we are taught in the Baraitha dealing with the construction of the Tabernacle (ch. 10): The full height of the candlestick was eighteen handbreadths, the legs and the flower taking up three handbreadths. — This is the flower mentioned in connection with the base, as it says, (Numbers 8:4) "unto the base thereof, unto the flower thereof". — Then there was a space of two handbreadths that was plain; then one handbreadth in which was one of the four goblets (mentioned Exodus 25:34) and a knob and a flower of those two knobs and those two flowers that are mentioned together with the candlestick proper — for it states, (v. 34) "[And on the candelabrum (i. e. on the shaft) there shall be four cups] made like unto almonds with their knobs and their flowers," which teaches us that there were on the middle branch two knobs and two flowers (the plural כפתריה ופרחיה without stating the number suggesting "two" of each kind; besides the three knobs from which the branches emerged and of which it is said, (Exodus 25:35) "And there shall be a knob under the two branches etc." — Then there were the following: two handbreadths that were plain; a handbreadth made up of a knob from which two branches emerged on each side, extending upward to the level of the candlestick proper; one handbreadth plain; one handbreadth made up of a knob with two branches emerging from it; one handbreadth plain, and a handbreadth made up of a knob from which two branches emerged and rose to the level of the candlestick proper; two handbreadths plain. Thus there remained three handbreadths in which were three goblets (three of the four mentioned in v. 34) and one knob and one flower (of the two mentioned Exodus 25:34-35). Consequently the goblets were twenty-two —

eighteen on the six branches, there being three on each, and four on the candlestick proper, making altogether twenty-two; — and there were eleven knobs, — six on the six branches, one on each, and three on the candlestick proper from which the branches emerged, and two more knobs on the candlestick proper, — for it says, "made like unto almonds with its knobs", and the minimum number implied by the plural כפתורים, is two. One of these was below near the base and the other in the upper three handbreadths together with the three goblets. Furthermore it had nine flowers, six on the six branches, — as it says, (Exodus 25:33) "with a knob and a flower on the one branch" — and three on the candlestick proper, viz., two as is implied in what is said "made like unto almonds with its knobs and its flowers" — and the minimum number to be understood by the plural פרחים is two, and one that is mentioned in the section בהעלתך, (Numbers 8:4) "unto the base thereof and the flower thereof." If you will study the above quoted Boraitha minutely you will find them (the different parts of the candlestick) enumerated according to their number, each in its position as laid down in this section (Menachot 28b).

Verse 36

Verse 37

את נרתיה ITS LAMPS — a kind of small bowls into which the oil and the wicks were put.
והאיר על עבר פניה AND MAKE THEM GIVE LIGHT OVER AGAINST IT — Make the mouths of those six lamps which are on the top of the branches that come out from its sides so that they are turned towards the middle branch, in order that when you kindle the lamps they shall cast their light over against its (the candlestick's) front-side, i. e. their light should be directed in the direction of the front of the central branch which forms the candlestick proper.

Verse 38

ומלקחיה — These were tongs made for taking the wicks out from the oil, to put them in position and to draw them into the mouths. Because people took things with them they were called מלקחים, (from לקח, "to take"). The word צבתהא by which Onkelos renders it is the same as the more familiar term צבת, "a pair of tongs"; tenailles in old French
ומחתתיה AND ITS SNUFF-DISHES — These were like small bowls into which the High Priest raked the ashes every morning when he cleansed out the lamps from the ashes of the wicks that had burned all night and had become extinguished. The word מחתה is fougère (feuchière) in old French, as in, (Isaiah 30:14) "to rake (לחתות) fire from the hearth."

Verse 39

ככר זהב טהור OF A TALENT OF PURE GOLD [SHALL HE MAKE IT WITH ALL THESE VESSELS] — i. e. that its weight together with (את) all its vessels shall he exactly one talent, neither more nor less (cf. Menachot 88b). A common (not holy) kikkar (one used for weighing ordinary articles) was sixty manehs, that used for sacred purposes double as much, hundred and twenty manehs; a maneh was equal to a litra (the Roman libra, a pound) by which silver is weighed, according to the standard weight of Cologne. This is hundred denars which is the equivalent of twenty-five Sela'im, one Sela being four denars (cf. Bekhorot 5a).

Verse 40

וראה ועשה AND SEE AND MAKE — See here, in the mountain, the pattern which I shew thee. This teaches you that Moses was puzzled about the workmanship of the Menorah until the Holy One, blessed be He, showed him the pattern of it in a candlestick of fire (Menachot 29a).
אשר אתה מראה WHICH WAS SHOWN THEE — Translate as the Targum does: דאת מתחזי בטורא which thou hast been shown on the mountain. If it were punctuated with Patach (מָרְאֶה) it would mean which you show to others," now, however, that it is punctuated with קמץ חטף (our קמץ חטוף, short Kametz) it signifies, "which thou hast been shown" — i. e. which others show thee [for the punctuation distinguishes between the words denoting "one who does something" and "one who has something done to him" (i. e. between the active participle מַרְאֶה and the passive participle מָרְאֶה).]

Chapter 26

Verse 1

ואת המשכן תעשה עשר יריעת MOREOVER THOU SHALT MAKE THE DWELLING OF TEN CURTAINS — that they should serve it as a roof and at the same time as wall-coverings for the outside of the boards; — for the curtains hung behind them so as to cover them.
שש משזר ותכלת וארגמן ותלעת שני OF FINE TWINED LINEN AND BLUE PURPLE, AND RED PURPLE, AND CRIMSON — Thus there were four different materials in every thread, one of linen and three of wool, each of the strands of which a thread was composed being sixfold (the word is taken here in the double sense of שש "linen" and of שש "six"). Consequently the four materials intertwined into one thread gave a twenty-four-fold thread (Yoma 71b; Baraita DeMelekhet HaMishkan ch. 2).
כרבים מעשה חשב WITH CHERUBIM, THE WORK OF AN ARTIST — Cherubim were figured on them (on the curtains) in the process of weaving them, not afterwards by embroidery which is needlework — but by weaving it on its two surfaces, one design on one side, a different design on the other; e. g., a lion on one side and an eagle on the other side, just as the silken girdles are woven which are called in old French faisee (Yoma 72b, Jerusalem Talmud Shekalim 8:4).

Verse 2

Verse 3

תהיין חברת SHALL JOIN TOGETHER — They sewed them together with a needle, each five separately.
אשה אל אחתה ONE TO ANOTHER (lit., a woman to her sister) — This is the idiom of Biblical Hebrew — to speak thus about a thing that is of the feminine gender when it correlates it with a thing of the same kind. In the case of a thing that is masculine it uses the expression איש אל אחיו, lit., a man to his brother, as it is said, e. g. of the cherubim (Exodus 25:20) "and their faces were turned איש אל אחיו".

Verse 4

ללאת are lacels in old French Similarly Onkelos translates it by ענובין, which has the meaning of "looping."

מקצה בחברת FROM THE EXTREMITY IN THE JOINING — i. e. the loops shall be made on that curtain which is the last in the section. The combination of five curtains is here termed חוברת.
וכן תעשה בשפת היריעה הקיצונה במחברה השנית— AND LIKEWISE SHALT THOU MAKE IN THE OUTERMOST EDGE OF ANOTHER CURTAIN IN THE JOINING OF THE SECOND — i. e. on that curtain which is the end-most — קיצונה is connected in meaning with קצה, end; — it is as much as to say: "at the end of the section."

Verse 5

מקבילת הלאת אשה אל אחתה — Be careful that you make the loops (place them on the curtains) to one measurement: that the spaces between one loop and the other be exactly the same, and further, as their measurement is on the one so shall it be on the other, so that when you lay out one section next to the other the loops of the one shall come exactly opposite those of the other. That is what is meant by the expression מקבילות, viz., "one opposite the other". In the Targum the translation of נֶגֶד "opposite" is לקבל (hence the term מקבילות from קבל). The curtains were twenty-eight cubits long and four cubits wide, so when they joined five curtains together along their lengths it followed that their width was twenty cubits. The same was the case with the other section. The Tabernacle was thirty cubits in length from East to West, for it is said, (Exodus 36:23) "twenty boards for the south side (which was the long side of the Tabernacle) southward," and the same is stated with reference to the north side; and as each board was one cubit and a half in breadth you have thirty cubits from East to West. The width of the Tabernacle from North to South was ten cubits, for it is said, (Exodus 36:27, 28) "and for the side of the dwelling westward he made six boards … and two boards … for the corners of the dwelling," so you have ten cubits (this appears to give a breadth of twelve cubits, but each of the corner boards stood partly behind the thickness of the adjoining board that stood at right angles with it, and as the thickness was one cubit it took off a cubit on each side from the inside measurement). — I shall explain these verses each on its place. — They spread the curtains with their length over the breadth of the Tabernacle, whereby the ten middle cubits served as a roofing for the inside over the width of the Tabernacle and a cubit on each side of these ten cubits went to cover the thickness of the boards which were one cubit thick, so that there remained altogether sixteen cubits — eight hanging over on the north side and eight on the south side, covering the vertical boards which were ten cubits in height; consequently the two lowest cubits of the boards were left showing. The breadth of the curtains after having been joined together was forty cubits, twenty cubits for each section. Thirty cubits of these served as a roofing for the inside of the Tabernacle over its length, and one cubit for the thickness of the tops of the boards of the westside and one more cubit to cover the thickness of the columns in the east side — for there were no boards in the east side but there were five columns on the hooks of which the screen was spread and hung as a kind of curtain (cf. Exodus 27:10). Thus there remained eight cubits which hung on the back of the Tabernacle on the west side, leaving the two lowest cubits showing. This I have found in the Boraitha מ"ט מדות. But in Treatise Shabbat 98b it is stated that the curtains did not cover the thickness of the columns on the east side, and consequently there were nine cubits of the curtains hanging on the back of the Tabernacle. The text of this section suppports this view, since it says (v. 33) "and thou shalt hang up the partition veil under the catches;" for if it were as the Boraitha states the partition veil would have been distant from the catches one cubit to the West.

Verse 6

קרסי זהב CATCHES OF GOLD — Fermels in old French They put one end of them into the loops on one section and the other end into the loops on the other section and they thus joined them (these sections) together by means of them.

Verse 7

יריעת עזים CURTAINS OF עזים — i. e. GOATS HAIR (cf. Rashi on Exodus 25:4).
לאהל על המשכן TO BE A COVERING UPON THE DWELLING — i. e. to spread them over the lower curtains (over those which had been already placed over the Tabernacle).

Verse 8

שלשים באמה [THE LENGTH OF ONE CURTAIN SHALL BE] THIRTY CUBITS — so that when they place them with their length over the breadth of the Tabernacle in the same way as they put the first curtains (the length of which was 28 cubits) it follows that they are in excess by one cubit on this side and one cubit on that side, thus covering one of the two cubits of the boards left showing. The lowest cubit of the boards which no curtain covered was that cubit which was inserted in the hole of the socket, for the sockets themselves were one cubit high.

Verse 9

וכפלת את היריעה הששית AND THOU SHALT DOUBLE THE SIXTH CURTAIN which was additional in these upper curtains over and above the lower curtains,
אל מול פני האהל OPPOSITE THE FRONT OF THE TENT; half of its breadth (two cubits) hung down, being doubled, over the screen which was on the east side before the entrance, whereby the Tabernacle gained the appearance of a modest bride who has her face covered by a veil.

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

וסרח העדף ביריעת האהל AND THE SURPLUS OF THE CURTAINS OF THE TENT over and above the lower curtains of the Tabernacle [SHALL HANG OVER etc.]. "The curtains of the אהל" were the upper ones made of goats' hair which Scripture calls אהל, as it states about them, (v. 7) "they shall be an אהל over the dwelling." The word אהל used in connection with them means only a covering (the word has not its usual meaning of "tent") because they formed a cover and a screen over the lower ones. They exceeded the lower ones by one half curtain on the west side. For the other half of the eleventh curtain which was in excess of the number of the lower ones was folded over to hang in front of the tent (the Tabernacle) (cf. v. 9). There therefore remained two cubits, — the breadth of the half of it — in excess of the width of the lower curtains (it is this which is here described as חצי היריעה העדפת "the half curtain that exceeded").
תסרח על אחרי המשכן SHALL HANG OVER THE BACK OF THE TABERNACLE — to cover the two cubits of the boards that were left bare.

אחרי המשכן THE BACK OF THE TABERNACLE — i. e. the west side. This is called "the back" because the entrance was on the east side which was therefore its front. The north and the south are accordingly called the "sides" in the right and the left directions.

Verse 13

והאמה מזה והאמה מזה AND A CUBIT ON THE ONE SIDE AND A CUBIT ON THE OTHER SIDE — i. e. on the north and on the south,
בעדף בארך יריעת האהל OF THE SURPLUS OF THE LENGTH OF THE CURTAINS OF THE TABERNACLE — i. e. which were in excess over the curtains of "the Tabernacle" (the woollen ones) by two cubits,
יהיה מרוח על צדי המשכן SHALL HANG OVER THE SIDES OF THE TABERNACLE — on the north and on the south as I have explained above. The Torah here teaches you a rule of life — that a man should take care of his artistic objects (this the Torah does by commanding that the beautiful lower curtains should be protected by coarse upper ones) (Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 422).

Verse 14

מכסה לאהל [AND THOU SHALT MAKE] A COVERING FOR THE אהל — For that roofing of goats' hair (which is termed אהל in this section) make still another covering of rams' skins dyed red, and above this also a covering of Tachash skins. These uppermost covers however covered the roof only (were not hanging over the sides), their length being 30 cubits and their width 10. This is the opinion of R. Nehemia (that the goats' skins and the layer of rams' and Tachash skins formed two different covers one above the other); according to R. Jehudah, however, there was only one cover, half of it being of rams' skins dyed red and half of it of Tachash skins (cf. Shabbat 28a).

Verse 15

ועשית את הקרשים AND THOU SHALT MAKE THE BOARDS — It should be said: "Thou shalt make boards" (without the definite article), the same form which is used of each of the other things (parts of the Tabernacle)! What is the force of the term, "the boards?" It speaks of those boards that already existed as being designated for that purpose. For our father Jacob had planted cedars (shittim-trees) in Egypt and when he died be bade his sons carry them up with them when they would leave Egypt. He told them that God would once command them to erect a dwelling of shittim-trees in the wilderness. "See" — added he — "that they be ready in your possession!" (cf. Rashi on Exodus 25:5). That is what the Babylonian embodied in his liturgical composition: The plant of those who had been admonished by their father Jacob grew up rapidly to become the cedars for the beams of our House (the Tabernacle), which refers to the fact that they had been admonished that they (the cedars) should be ready in their possession in advance (before they were needed).
עצי שטים עמדים OF SHITTIM-WOOD STANDING UP — Estantivs in old French; Engl, perpendicular. — This means that the length of the boards shall be placed perpendicular in the walls of the Tabernacle and that you shall not make the walls of the boards placed horizontally so that the breadth of the boards should be along the height of the walls, one board upon the other.

Verse 16

עשר אמות ארך הקדש TEN CUBITS SHALL BE THE LENGTH OF A BOARD — This tells us that the height of the Tabernacle was ten cubits (since the boards were standing vertically).
ואמה וחצי האמה רחב AND A CUBIT AND A HALF SHALL BE THE BREADTH — This teaches us that the length of the Tabernacle corresponding to the twenty boards which were on the north and on the south was 30 cubits from east to west.

Verse 17

שתי ידות לקרש האחד TWO TENONS THERE SHALL BE IN ONE BOARD — They cut out the lower part of the boards in the middle to a height of one cubit leaving one fourth of its width on the one side and one fourth of it on the other side. These pieces on each side of the boards were the ידות, the tenons. Thus the part cut out was one half of the breadth of the board (¾ cubit) in its centre. Now these tenons they fixed into the sockets which were made hollow. The sockets were one cubit in height and they lay in a line forty of them, one close against the other. The tenons of the boards that were fixed into the sockets were then cut away on three sides, the depth of the portions thus cut away being equal to the thickness of the rim of the sockets, so that when the boards were fixed in the sockets the wood of the board would cover the entire top of the socket. For if this were not so (if the tenons were not cut away on their outside edge) there would have been a space between one board and the next equal to the thickness of the rims of two sockets which would have separated them. That is what is meant when it says, (v. 24) "and they shall be coupled together beneath" — that they should cut away the sides of the tenons in order that the boards should join closely one to the other.
משלבת means made like the rungs (שליבה) of a ladder and separated from each other and planed at their ends in order that they could be inserted into the hollow of the sockets like a rung which is fixed in the hole in the ladder's uprights.
אשה אל אחתה ONE TO THE OTHER — i. e. the tenons should correspond exactly one to the other; the meaning is that the portions cut away from the fronts and backs shall be precisely equal, one portion cut away having the same measurement as another portion cut away in order that of two tenons one should not diverge from a straight line towards the front and the other diverge towards the outside (the back) in reference to the thickness of the board which was one cubit. The Targum renders ידות by צירין, pivots, because they resembled, in one respect, the pivots of a door which are inserted in the hole in the threshold.

Verse 18

לפאת נגבה תימנה ON THE SOUTH SIDE SOUTHWARD — The word פאה here has not the meaning of "corner" (as e. g., Leviticus 19:9, פאת שדך) but the whole side is called פאה, as the Targum has it: לרוח עבר דרומא.

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

ולירכתי AND FOR THE BACKPART — This is a term for "end", as the Targum renders it, ולסיפי, "for the ends." Because the entrance was on the east the east-side is called the front and the west-side the back. And this is why it is described here by a word denoting end, because the front is the head (the beginning) of a thing.
תעשה ששה קרשים THOU SHALT MAKE SIX BOARDS — thus you have 9 cubits in the breadth.

Verse 23

ושני קרשים תעשה למקצעת AND TWO BOARDS SHALT THOU MAKE FOR THE CORNERS — one for the north-west corner and one for the south-west corner. All the eight boards were set in a row, only that the entire width of these two did not show in the interior of the Tabernacle, but only a half cubit on the one side and a half cubit on the other side could be seen in the interior, thus making up the breadth to ten cubits. The remaining cubit of one board and the remaining cubit of the other board came against the cubit thickness of the boards of the Tabernacle on the north and the south sides, so that the outside should be even.

Verse 24

ויהיו AND THEY SHALL BE — all the boards shall be —תאמים COUPLED TOGETHER with each other, מלמטה BENEATH, so that the thickness of the edges of two adjacent sockets should not form a space between them, keeping them apart. That is what I meant when I explained (v. 17) that the pivot-like tenons of a board should be cut away on all sides, in order that the breadth of the board shall project at the sides beyond the tenons of the boards that it may cover the rim of the socket. In like manner was the adjacent board treated. The result was that they coupled together (stood one close against the other). Each end-board in the western row was cut away along its width into its thickness over against the portion cut away from the adjacent boards of the northern and southern wall, so that the sockets standing between should not part them (the end-board and that standing next to it on the north side or south side).
ויחדו יהיו תמים AND THEY SHALL BE COUPLED TOGETHER — תמים has the same meaning here as תאמים in the phrase immedialely preceding.
על ראשו ABOVE THE HEAD OF IT — i. e. of each board.
אל הטבעת האחת INTO ONE RING — Each board had on the top two semi-circular incisions, one on each end of its breadth, tallying with the thickness of the ring which was to be inserted into it. They passed it (the board) into the same ring into which the next board had been passed (see illustration); Thus it (one board) joined close to the board next to it. I do not know however whether these rings were fixed to the boards or whether they were loose (not screwed down). In the case of the end-board the ring was inserted into the incisions made in the thickness of the north and south board respectively, and the top of the board which was in the west row adjacent to it was passed into it also. Thus the two pairs of walls (the western with the southern and northern respectively) were held together.
כן יהיה לשניהם THUS SHALL IT BE FOR THEM BOTH — for the two end-boards; e. g., for the board at the end of the north side and for the adjacent board in the western wall; and thus shall it be at both corners.

Verse 25

והיו שמנה קרשים AND THEY SHALL BE EIGHT BOARDS — These are the same boards mentioned above (vv. 22—23): "Thou shalt make six boards" … "and two boards shalt thou make for the corners"; consequently there were eight boards in the western row. The following is stated in that Mishna (paragraph) in the Boraitha dealing with "The structure of the Tabernacle" which treats of the method of arranging the boards of the Tabernacle: they made the sockets hollow, and cut away the board at the bottom, a quarter of its width being left on one side and a quarter on the other side, the portion cut away in the middle being one half its width. Thus they made for it (the board) two tenons like two חמוקין — I think the correct reading is, "like two חווקין" i. e. like two rungs of a ladder set at some distance one from the other. These were planed down so as to fix into the hollow of the socket just as a rung which is fixed into the hole in the ladder's upright. This is the meaning of משלבות, viz., made like a rung (שליבה). They fixed them (the two tenons) into the two sockets as it says, (v. 19) "two sockets [under one board for its two tenons] and two sockets [under another board for its two tenons]". They cut out the board at the top a finger breadth on this side and a finger breadth on that side and put them (two semicircular projecting pieces on two adjacent boards) into one golden ring in order that they (the boards) should not fall apart, as it says, "and they shall be coupled together beneath, [and they shall be coupled together above]." Thus the Mishna; its explanation I have set forth above following the order of the verses.

Verse 26

בריחים are BOLTS, as the Targum translates it: עברין; in old French esparres.
חמשה לקרשי צלע המשכן FIVE FOR THE BOARDS OF THE ONE SIDE OF THE TABERNACLE — The five were really only three, but the upper and the lower bolts were each composed of two pieces, the one reaching to the middle of the wall from one side and the other reaching to the middle of the wall from the other side, the one passing through the outermost ring from one side and the other passing through the outermost ring from the other side, until, passing through all the intermediate rings, they met one against each other. Thus the upper and lower bolts were two which were made up of four. As to the middle bolt its length was equal to that of the entire wall passing from one end of the wall to the other end, for it is said, "And the middle bolt etc. shall reach from extremity to extremity." This was therefore in one piece, and so we have the five of which this passage speaks. For the upper and lower bolts had rings on the boards into which were to be inserted two rings for each board. The bolts were משלשים i. e. placed at three equidistant points along the ten cubits that formed the height of the board, thus dividing the height into four equal portions, — one portion extending from the upper ring to the top of the board, another from the lower ring to the bottom, each portion being a quarter of the board's height, and the other two portions were between the rings (from one ring to the central bolt and from there to the other ring). This was done in order that all the rings in one row should be exactly opposite one another so that the bolt could be easily inserted. The middle bolt, however, had no rings, but the) wards were grooved right through their thickness and it (the middle bolt) passed through them by way of these grooves which were exactly opposite one another (all in one straight line). This is the meaning of what is stated, "[and the middle bolt] in the midst of the boards." The upper two and the lower two bolts on the north and south side were each 15 cubits long, whilst the middle bolt was 30 cubits long. That is what Scripture means by saying of this bolt that it shall reach "from extremity to extremity" — from east to west. Of the five bolts on the west side the length of the two upper and the two lower ones was each six cubits whilst the middle one hade its

length twelve cubits corresponding to the aggregate width of the eight boards (each of which was one cubit and a half). This is how it is explained in the Boraitha treating of the construction of the Tabernacle.

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

בתים לבריחם FOR PLACES FOR THE BOLTS — The rings which you shall make on them (the boards) shall serve as receptacles into which the bolts shall be inserted.
וצפית את הבריחם זהב AND THOU SHALT OVERLAY THE BOLTS WITH GOLD —This does not mean that the gold should be attached to the bolts for there was no overlay on them, but on the boards there were fixed a kind of two gold staples something like the two longitudinal sections of a hollow cane. These were fixed close to each ring on both sides of it. The length of the two staples filled up the space along the width of the board, one extending from the ring in this direction, the other from it (the ring) again in the other direction. Thus the bolts appeared to be covered with gold when they were lying on the boards. These bolts formed a projection on the walls outside. Thus neither the rings nor the staples were visible within the interior of the Tabernacle, but the entire surface of the wall within was unbroken.

Verse 30

והקמת את המשכן AND THOU SHALT SET UP THE TABERNACLE — after it is completed set it up....
הראית בהר This must be translated: WHICH THOU WILT before then HAVE BEEN SHOWN IN THE MOUTAIN — (The verb is future perfect). For later on I shall instruct thee and show thee the way to erect it.

Verse 31

פרכת is a term denoting a partition; in the language of the Sages (in Rabbinical Hebrew) פרגוד is something which separates the king from the people (Berakhot 18b).
תכלת וארגמן BLUE PURPLE, AND RED PURPLE — every material was intertwined in each strand by six threads (Yoma 71b).
מעשה חשב THE WORK OF AN ARTIST — I have already explained (v. 9) that this is a weaving on the two surfaces, the designs on the two sides not being similar to one another.
כרבים CHERUBIM — i. e. he shall make on it figures of different creatures.

Verse 32

ארבעה עמודי FOUR COLUMNS inserted into four sockets. Hooks were fixed upon them, bent upward, upon each of which to hang a pole round which the top of the partition veil was wrappped. The hooks are the ווים mentioned in the text, for they were made in the form of the letter ו"וי. The partition veil was ten cubits long corresponding to the breadth of the Tabernacle and ten cubits wide as was the height of the boards. It was hung at one-third of the length of the Tabernacle from the western side

so that from it there should be inward (i. e. to that side) ten cubits and from it outward (to the entrance) twenty cubits. It follows therefore that the Holy of Holies was ten by ten cubits, and this agrees with what is said, (v. 33) "and thou shalt hang up the partition veil under the catches" that coupled the two sections of the curtaining of the Tabernacle together. For the breadth of one section was twenty cubits and when it was laid over the top of the Tabernacle from the entrance to the west, its end with the catches came at two-thirds of the length of the Tabernacle (20 cubits), exactly where we have stated that the veil was hanging. The second section covered the other third of the length of the Tabornacle (10 cubits) and what was left over (10 cubits) hung behind to cover the boards (which were 10 cubits in height; cf. Rashi on v. 5).

Verse 33

Verse 34

Verse 35

ושמת את השלחן AND THOU SHALT PUT THE TABLE [WITHOUT THE PARTITION VEIL] — The table was in the north, distant from the north wall two cubits and a half. The candelabrum was in the south, distant from the south wall two cubits and a half. The golden altar was opposite the space which was between the table and candelabrum drawn back slightly towards the east (cf. Rashi on Exodus 30:6). All these three were placed in that part which extended from one-half the length of the Tabcrnacle (not including the Holy of Holies) inward. How so? The length of the Tabernacle from the entrance to the partition veil was 20 cubits, and the altar, the table and the candelabrum were distant from the entrance in a western direction 10 cubits(Yoma 33b).

Verse 36

ועשית מסך AND THOU SHALT MAKE A SCREEN — a curtain which formed a protecting screen in front of the entrance. the word מסך being of the same meaning as the verb in (Job 1. 10) "Hast Thou not hedged (שכת) him about?" It is an expression denoting protecting.
מעשה רקם THE WORK OF AN EMBROIDERER — The designs were made on it by needle-work; as were the figures on one side so were the figures on the other side.
רקם — This word is the name of the workman (an embroiderer), not the name of the trade (embroidery). The Targum therefore should be עוּבד עַיָּר "work of an embroiderer," not עוּבד עִיּוּר "work of embroidery." The size of the screen was the same as the size of the partition veil, viz., 10 cubits by 10 cubits.

Chapter 27

Verse 1

ועשית את המזבח וגו׳ ושלש אמות קמתו AND THOU SHALT MAKE AN ALTAR etc. AND THE HEIGHT THEREOF SHALL BE THREE CUBITS — These words should be understood as they are written (i. e. to mean exactly what they say — that its height was three cubits); this is the opinion of R. Jehudah. R.

José, however, says: it is stated here, "[the altar shall be] square" and it is stated with reference to the inner (the golden) altar, (Exodus 30:2) "square [shall it be]." How was it there (in the case of the latter)? Its height was twice its length ("a cubit the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof,. .. and two cubits the height thereof")! So, also, here: the height shall be twice its length, i. e. ten cubits. And if you ask, how, then, do I explain the words and three cubits the height thereof?" I reply that this gives the measurement from the edge of the surround (סובב) upwards (whilst 10 cubits was the actual height from the ground to the top of the altar) (cf. Zevachim 60a; Rashi on v. 5).

Verse 2

ממנו תהיין קרנתיו ITS HORNS SHALL BE OF THE SAME — i. e. he shall not make them separately and afterwards attach them to it (to the altar).
וצפית אתו נחשת AND THOU SHALT OVERLAY IT WITH COPPER — to atone for sins committed with effrontery (more lit., with impudence of forehead, the Hebrew expression for effrontery being, "having a copper forehead,") as it is said, (Isaiah 48:4) "[Because I know that thou art obstinate] and that thy forehead is copper" (cf. our English expression "brazen-faced") (Midrash Tanchuma, Terumah 11).

Verse 3

סירתיו — a kind of pot.
לדשנו means TO REMOVE ITS ASHES in them. That is exactly as Onkelos translated it: למספי קטמה, to remove the ashes into them. For although in its primary sense דָּשַׁן would mean to cover with ashes, it has also the meaning of removing the ashes, for there are in the Hebrew language certain expressions with the peculiarity that the same word changes in meaning so as to be used to denote both "construction" and "destruction," (having a positive and a negative meaning). Examples are: (Psalms 80:10) "and didst cause it to take deep root (ותשרש)"; (Job 5:3) "I have seen the foolish taking root (משרש)," whilst we have its opposite (negative) meaning in, (Job 31:12) "and thou wouldst root out (תשרש) all my increase." Similar to it is, (Isaiah 17:6) "in the utmost fruitful branches (בסעיפיה)," and its opposite, (Isaiah 10:33) "The Lord of hosts shall מסעף", i. e. shall lop off the branches thereof. Similar to it is also (Jeremiah 50:17) "And this last person עִצָּמוֹ" — "has broken his bones" although the primary meaning of עצם is to be strongboned. Similar to it is, (1 Kings 21:13) "and stoned him with stones (ויסקלהו)" i. e. heaped up stones above him, and its opposite is, (Isaiah 62:10) "סקלו the stones" — i. e. remove its stones; and so, too, (Isaiah 5:2) "And he fenced it and gathered out the stones thereof (ויסקלהו)." Thus here, also, לדשנו means to remove its ashes. In 0. F. à discendrer.
ויעיו AND ITS SHOVELS — as the Targum renders it, מגרפות, shovels by which the ashes were removed. They had the form of the lid of a pot, of thin metal, but having a handle. In old French vedil.
ומזרקתיו AND ITS BOWLS, in which to receive the blood of the sacrifices.
ומזלגתיו AND ITS FLESHHOOKS — These had the form of bent hooks; they stuck them forcibly into the flesh so that they penetrated it, and with them they turned the flesh over upon the coals of the fire-place in order that it might become the more quickly consumed. In old French these are called crochets and in the language of our Sages צנוריות (Yoma 12a).
ומחתתיו AND ITS FIRE-PANS — These had a cavity to hold things so that the coals might be taken in them from the altar in order to carry them on to the inner altar for the incense. And because of their use for raking the coals into them (חתיה) they were called מחתות. This word is of the same root and meaning as the verb in, (Isaiah 30:14) "לחתות fire from the

fire-place," which has the meaning of drawing fire from its place. Similar is, (Proverbs 6:27) "Can a man rake (היחתה) fire into his bosom?" לכל כליו means ALL THE VESSELS THEREOF [THOU SHALT MAKE OF COPPER] (i. e. it does not mean: "thou shalt make things of copper, for (i. e. to serve as) all its vessels" but the ל is redundant; cf. Rashi on Exodus 14:28).

Verse 4

מכבר A GRATE — מכבר is an expression connected with כברה, a sieve which is called in old French crible. A kind of covering was made for the altar, constructed with many holes just like a net. The word of this verse are transposed, and its explanation is as follows: And thou shalt make for it a grate of copper, of network.

Verse 5

כרכב המזבח THE COMPASS OF THE ALTAR — כרכב is a surround. Anything which encompasses an object all the way round is called כרכב, just as we read in the Talmudical section beginning with the words הכל שוחטין (Chullin 25a): The following come under the description of unfinished wooden vessels — all such as have still to be polished and to be rounded off (ולכרכב; i. e. making a rim by hollowing out the centre). This is similar to the practice of making rounded grooves in the boards that form the sides of chests and wooden chairs. For the altar too he made a hollowing round about — its width was a cubit — in its wall for ornamentation. It was made at the end of three cubits of its height (measuring from the top of the altar). This is according to the view of him who says (cf. v. 1): its (the altar's) height was twice its length. And if you ask how, then, can I explain the statement, "and the height thereof shall be three cubits" I reply, that this gives the measurement from the edge of the surround upwards. This surround served only as an ornamentation, but a surround for the priests to walk upon when officiating the copper altar had only on its top within its horns (running from one horn to the other). Thus we read in Treatise Zevachim 62a: What is the כרכב? The sunken space between one horn of the altar and the other, this being a cubit in width, and, from that space inward (towards the centre of the altar) a space of another cubit upon which the priests could walk right round the altar, thus making a surround two cubits in width. These two cubits were called כרכב. The criticism is there made to this definition: But is it not written, "[and thou shalt put it (the grate)] under the compass of the altar beneath" — which statement teaches us that the כרכב was on the side of the altar and not on its top since the covering formed by the grate was beneath it? Whereupon the Talmud replies (lit., the replier replies), that in fact there were two surrounds, one for ornamentation (that below) and another (on the top) for the priests that they should not slip off when walking round. The one on the side of the altar was intended for ornamentation, and beneath it they put the grate as a covering and its width reached to the middle of its (the altar's) height, measuring this from the ground. It also served to mark the middle of its height separating the two halves of the altars side upon which were put respectively the sacrifical blood which had to be sprinkled above (on the upper part; this was the blood of a חטאת) and the blood which had to be sprinkled below (that of עולה,שלמים and אשם). Corresponding to this there was made for the altar in the "Eternal House" (the Temple at Jerusalem) a sign consisting of a red line (Zevachim 53a; Mishnah Middot 3:1). As to the ascent (כבש — the inclined plane) upon which they went up to the top of the altar, it is true that Scripture does not expressly mention it in this section but we have it already implied in the statement in the section beginning with the words מזבח אדמה תעשה לי (Exodus 20:21—23): "Thou shalt not go up by steps [unto my

altar]" — i. e. thou shalt not make steps on its ascent, but thou shalt make an unbroken ascent, — this tells us that it had such an ascent. — So do we read in the Mechilta d'Rabbi Yishmael 20:23:1). — For the altar of earth there spoken of is identical with the altar of copper described here and it was called an altar of earth because they used to fill the hollow space within it (within its coppered walls) with earth at every place where they encamped in the wilderness. This ascent was on the south of the altar, its top standing away from the altar just a hair's breadth (i. e. almost touching the altar). Its foot reached to the cubit adjacent to the hangings of the court on the south, (i. e. it was one cubit distant from those hangings of the enclosure). This latter statement is according to him who holds that its height (that of the altar) was ten cubits, whilst according to him who holds that the command, (v. 1) "and three cubits shall be the height thereof" is to be taken literally (cf. Rashi on v. 1) the length of the ascent was only ten cubits, for since the altar was lower the slope leading to its top could not be a very long one. So did I find in the Boraitha דמ"ט מדות (cf. Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 419). And as regards this statement that it stood away from the top of the altar just a hair's breadth, in Treatise Zevachim 62b they (the Rabbis) derived it from a Biblical text.

Verse 6

Verse 7

בטבעת [AND THE BARS SHALL BE BROUGHT] INTO THE RINGS — into the four rings made for the grate (v. 4).

Verse 8

נבוב לחת HOLLOW WITH TABLETS — Render it as the Targum does, חליל לוחין, hollow as regards boards (לוחין is what is termed an accusative of respect): boards of shittim-wood on all sides (cf. v. 1) and a hollow space in the middle; it shall not be in its entirety a single block of wood, the thickness of which in two directions should be five cubits by five cubits — like the trunk of a tree, which has been hollowed out.

Verse 9

קלעים HANGINGS — made like the sails of ships, full of holes, of plaited work and not weaver's work. The rendering in the Targum, סרדין, is the same as the rendering of מְכֻבָּר, which it renders by the singular סרדא; this is because they, both the hangings and the grate, are riddled with holes like a sieve.
לפאה האחת FOR ONE SIDE — the entire side (not only the corner; cf. Rashi on Exodus 26:18) is called פאה.

Verse 10

ועמדיו עשרים AND TWENTY COLUMNS THEREOF — There was a space of five cubits between one column and the other
ואדניהם AND THE SOCKETS of the columns SHALL BE OF COPPER (i. e. the word נחשת is to be connected only with the preceding word ואדניהם, not with ועמדיו at the beginning of the verse). The sockets rested on the ground and the columns were inserted in them. There was made a kind of rail which is called pals in old French, six handbreadths by three, and a copper ring was fixed in its centre. They folded the upper edge of the curtaining round it (round each rail) by cords at the places where the

curtaining came opposite each column and they hung the rail by its ring on the hook which was on the column and which was made like the letter ו — one of its ends being bent upward and the other end being driven into the column, like those hooks which are made to fix doors upon them, and which are called in old French gonds. Thus the width of curtain was hanging down and this width formed the height of the walls of the court. וו העמדים are the hooks already mentioned.
וחשקיהם AND THEIR FILLETS — The columns were encircled with silver threads. I do not know, however, whether this was done over their whole surface or at the top only or round the middle only, but I do know that חשוק denotes "tied on", for we find in the account of the concubine of Gibeah (Judges 19:10): "there were with him a couple of asses saddled (חבושים lit., bound)" which latter word the Targum renders by חשוקים.

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

לפאת קדמה מזרחה ON THE EAST SIDE EASTWARDS — The last two words are the same as פני המזרח. The word הדם is synonymous with פנים, the face (the front side of any thing), and אחור is the same term as אֲחוֹרַיִם, the buttocks, the back-side. The East is therefore called קדם because it is the front part of the world; correspondingly, the West is called אחור, the back part of the world just as you speak of (Deuteronomy 11:24) הים האחרון the Hinder Sea, which the Targum renders by "the Western Sea."
חמשים אמה FIFTY CUBITS — These fifty cubits were not all filled in with curtaining, because the entrance was there; there were only fifteen cubits of curtaining at the side of the entrance in the one direction, similarly on the other side thereof. Thus there was left the width of the open space at the entrance consisting of 20 cubits between (between the two lengths of curtaining to the right and left of the entrance). This is what is meant by: (v. 16) "and for the gate of the enclosure a veil of twenty cubits" — a veil serving as a screen for the entrance, twenty cubits long, equal to the breadth of the entrance.

Verse 14

עמדיהם שלשה THEIR COLUMNS THREE — There were five cubits space between one column and another column: between the column at the end of the southern row, standing at the southeast corner, to the first column which was one of the three in the east there were five cubits; from that to the second, five cubits, and from the second to the third, five cubits. It was similar at the other side of the entrance. And four columns for the screen are mentioned here, so that you have ten columns for the east corresponding to the ten columns in the west side (v. 12).

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

כל עמודי החצר סביב וגו׳ ALL THE COLUMNS ROUND ABOUT THE ENCLOSURE etc. — Because Scripture expressly mentioned hooks and fillets and copper sockets in connection only with the north and the south, and with regard to the east and the west there is no mention of hooks and fillets and copper sockets (cf. vv. 14, 15, where there is indeed mention of sockets but it is not stated that they should be of copper), therefore Scripture now comes and gives directions that the sockets of all the pillars that are round about should be of copper.

Verse 18

ארך החצר THE LENGTH OF THE ENCLOSURE — i. e. its north and south sides which run from east to west, SHALL BE A HUNDRED CUBITS.
ורחב חמשים בחמשים AND THE BREADTH FIFTY EVERYWHERE — The part of the enclosure in the east side was a square of fifty by fifty cubits, for the Tabernacle was thirty cubits long and 10 cubits wide. Its entrance was placed in the east at the end of the outer fifty cubits of the length of the enclosure; consequently it (the Tabernacle) was entirely within the inner (the western) fifty cubits and its length finished up at the end of another thirty cubits (thus using up eighty cubits in the middle of the length of the enclosure); it followed therefore that it had a space of twenty cubits behind, between the hangings of the enclosure in the west and the curtains of the back of the Tabernacle. The breadth of the Tabernacle was using up ten cubits in the middle of the breadth of the enclosure; thus it had a space of twenty cubits on the north and on the south between the hangings of the enclosure and the curtains of the Tabernacle and there was a similar space in the west, as shown above, whilst fifty by fifty was the court in front of it (cf. Eruvin 23b).
וקמה חמש אמות AND THE HEIGHT FIVE CUBITS — The height of the partitions of the enclosure was five cubits and this was formed by the breadth of the curtaining.
ואדניהם נחשת AND THEIR SOCKETS OF COPPER — This statement is intended to include the sockets of the screen — that you should not say: sockets of copper are prescribed only for the columns of the curtaining (v. 17), but the sockets of the screen which are not stated to be of copper (v. 16) may be of another material; this, it appears to me, is the reason why Scripture repeats these words after having used them in v. 17.

Verse 19

לכל כלי המשכן ALL THE VESSELS OF THE TABERNACLE that were necessary for erecting it and for taking it down as, for instance, hammers to drive in the pegs and the columns.
יתדת PEGS — a kind of copper nail made for the curtains of the אהל (the second layer of curtain over the top) and for the hangings of the enclosure, fastened to these by cords all the way round them on their lower edge in order that the wind should not lift them up. I do not know for certain whether they were stuck in the ground or whether they were merely tied to the edges and hung down, their weight loading the edges of the curtains that they should not move about in the wind. But I would say that their name (i. e. the name given here to these pieces of metal) shows that they were stuck in the ground, and for that reason they are here called יתדת. The following verse supports me in my opinion: (Isaiah 33:20) "A tent that shall not be taken down; its stakes (יתדותיו) shall never be plucked up.".

Verse 20

זך ...ואתה תצוה CLEAR — without lees; and this was effected not by straining the oil but as we learn in Treatise Menachoth 86a “He lets it (the olive) ripen on the top of the olive-tree etc.”
כתית BEATEN — he pounds the olives in a mortar and must not grind them in a mill, so that there may be no lees; and after he has thus extracted the first drop of oil he may bring them into the mill and grind them. The second oil (that obtained by grinding) is unfitted for use in the candelabrum but is permissible for the meal-offerings (which had to be mingled with oil) since it is said here, “Beaten for the light”, and hence it is not essential that it should be beaten for the meal-offerings (Menachot 86a; cf. Rashi on Exodus 29:40).
להעלות נר תמיד TO CAUSE THE LIGHT TO BURN (lit., to ascend) CONTINUALLY — he must enkindle it until the flame ascends by itself (Shabbat 21a).
תמיד CONTINUALLY — doing something every night, as is described here, may be termed תמיד, continually, just as you speak of (Numbers 27:6) “The continual (תמיד) burnt-offering”, although this was sacrificed only from day to day. So, too, in the case of the meal-offering made in a flat pan it is said, (Leviticus 6:13) that it should be brought continually (תמיד) and yet it was only brought thus: “Half of it in the morning, and half of it at evening”. However, the expression תמיד which is used in connection with the show-bread (Exodus 25:30) denotes the whole period without a break from Sabbath to Sabbath).

Verse 21

מערב עד בקר FROM EVENING TO MORNING — Give it its due measure of oil so that it may burn from evening to morning. Our Rabbis estimated half a log of oil as sufficient for the nights of Tebeth which are long, and they ordained a similar quantity for every night of the year, and if any were left over on the shorter nights it did not matter (Menachot 89a).

Chapter 28

Verse 1

ואתה הקרב אליך AND THOU TAKE TO THEE after the work of the Tabernacle is finished.

Verse 2

Verse 3

לקדשו לכהנו לי TO SANCTIFY HIM, TO APPOINT HIM AS PRIEST TO ME — to sanctify him, i. e. to instal him into the priesthood by means of the garments here specified, so that he may become priest unto Me. The expression of כהונה denotes service — serventrie in old French

Verse 4

חשן A BREAST-PLATE — an ornament borne in front of the heart.
ואפוד AND AN EPHOD — I have heard no tradition nor have I found in the Boraitha any description of its shape, but my own mind tells me that it was tied on behind him; its breadth was the same as the breadth of a man’s back like a kind of apron which is called pourceint in old French which ladies of rank tie on when they ride on horse-back. Such, as mentioned, was the way in which the lower part was made, as it is said,

(II Samuel 6:14) "And David was girded with a linen ephod" — this informs us that the ephod was something tied on the body. It is, however, not possible to say that it consisted of a girdle only, because it is said (Leviticus 8:7) "And he put the ephod upon him", and afterwards it is stated "and he girded him with the חשב of the ephod" and this Onkelos translated by "the girdle of the ephod." This, therefore, informs us that the חשב is the girdle and the אפור is the name of the ornamental garment itself. Further, it is not possible to assert that it was on account of the two shoulder-straps that it was called אפוד (i. e. that the term אפוד applies to these two straps and the girdle to which they were attached) for it is said, (v. 27) "the two shoulder-pieces of the ephod" — this tells us that the ephod is a separate name, the shoulderpieces a separate name and the girdle a separate name (i. e. each of these is the name of separate articles). Consequently I say that it is called אפוד in reference to the apron-like garment which hung down and that it was so called because they bedecked him (אופדו) and ornamented him with it, as it is said, (Leviticus 8:7) "And he bedecked (ויאפוד) him with it." The חשב was the girdle which was on the upper portion of it (the ephod), and the shoulder-pieces were attached to it. Further, my own mind tells me that there is evidence that it was a kind of garment, for Jonathan ben Uzziel translates (II Samuel 6:14) "And David was girded with a linen ephod" by "a linen כרדוט" and exactly similarly does he translate מעילים, "robes", by כרדוטין in the story of Tamar, Absolom's sister, (II Samuel 13:18) "For with such robes (מעילים) were the king's daughters that were virgins apparelled".
מעיל — This was a kind of shirt and so, too, the כתונת, except that the כתונת was worn immediately on the body and מעיל is a term for the outer shirt.
תשבץ A QUILTED [INNER GARMENT] — made with משבצות as ornaments. These משבצות were a kind of indentations which are made in gold ornaments as a setting in which to fix precious stones and pearls, as it is said of the stones of the ephod, (v. 11) "enclosed in settings (משבצות) of gold." In old French they call them castons.
מצנפת — a kind of domed helmet which they call cofea in old French, for in another passage (v. 40) it calls them מגבעות which we translate in the Targum by כובעין, helmets.
ואבנט — This was a girdle upon the inner-garment, and the ephod was the girdle over the outer-garment, just as we find it stated in the description of the order in which they were donned: (Leviticus 8:7), "And he put upon him the inner-garment (כתנת) and girded him with the belt (אבנט) and clothed him with the mantle (מעיל) and put the ephod (אפוד) upon him."
בגדי קדש lit., GARMENTS OF THE HOLY THING — i. e. from the heave-offering that is sanctified (מקדשת) to My Name shall they make them (Sifra, Acharei Mot, Chapter 1 10).

Verse 5

והם יקחו AND THEY SHALL TAKE — Those men, wise in heart (cf. v. 3), who are to make the garments shall receive from the donors את הזהב ואת התכלת THE GOLD AND THE BLUE PURPLE, in order to make the garments of them.

Verse 6

ועשו את האפד AND THEY SHALL MAKE THE EPHOD — If I set myself to explain the making of the ephod and the breast-plate in the order of the verses, the description of them would be fragmentary and the reader might err in piecing the details together: therefore I shall write down how they were made, just as each of them was, in order that "he who runs may read" (may have a comprehensive idea of them in their entirety), and afterwards I

shall explain it in the order of the verses. The ephod was made like that kind of apron of women who ride on horse-back. He (the priest) tied it on behind him opposite (at the height of) his heart below his elbows. Its breadth was equal to the measure of a man's back and somewhat more (cf. Rashi, end of v. 26), and it reached to his heels. The belt was attached to its top edge along the whole of its width, being of weaver's work (i. e. woven in one piece with the ephod) and it extended on both sides beyond the width of the ephod in order that it might go right round the body and gird on the ephod by means of it. The shoulder-pieces were attached to the belt, one on the right and one the left, behind the priest, at the two ends of the width of the apron, and when they were lifted up they stood (we should say "they lay") upon his two shoulders, so that they were like two straps made of the same material as the ephod itself, and sufficiently long to lift them up to reach to his neck on both sides, and they hung over in front of him a little below his shoulders. The onyx stones were fixed in them, one on his right shoulder and one on his left shoulder, and the settings were placed in their ends in front of his shoulders on his breast. Two cords of gold were inserted through two rings which were on the breastplate at the two ends of its upper width (edge), one on the right and one on the left, and the two ends of the chain (or cord) were fixed in the setting on the right, and similarly the two ends of the left chain were fixed in the setting which was on the left shoulder. Consequently, the breast-plate hung in front of him over his heart from the settings of the ephod. Further, there were two rings at the two ends of the breast-plate on its lower edge, and opposite them two rings below on the two shoulder pieces of the ephod on the lower edge of each where this was joined to the belt. The under two rings on the breast-plate were opposite the rings on the ephod, lying one upon the other, and they fastened them (each pair of rings) together by a blue purple thread which was inserted through the rings in the ephod and breast-plate, so that the lower edge of the breast-plate should lie close to the belt of the ephod and should not move about and come apart from it, swinging to and fro.

זהב תכלת וארגמן תולעת שני ושש משזר OF GOLD, OF BLUE PURPLE, AND OF RED PURPLE, OF CRIMSON AND FINE TWISTED LINEN — The five materials were intertwined in every strand: they beat out the gold into the form of thin plates and from them they cut threads, and they wove that gold thread together with six threads of blue purple and a gold thread with six threads of red purple, and similarly with the crimson and similarly with the fine linen; because all the materials had their threads sixfold and there was a gold thread with each of them. Then they intertwined them all into one thread; it followed, therefore, that their thread was 28-fold. This is how it is explained in Treatise Yoma 72a and it is derived from the following verse: (Exodus 39:3) "And they beat out the gold into thin plates and cut it into threads to work the threads of gold in the blue purple and in the red purple, etc." — this tells us that a gold thread was intertwined with each material.

מעשה חשב THE WORK OF AN ARTIST — I have already explained (Exodus 26:1) that this was weaving on both sides: that is, that the designs on both sides were not similar one to the other.

Verse 7

שתי כתפת וגו׳ TWO SHOULDER-PIECES, etc. — The apron was below and the חשב of the ephod was the belt, and this was joined to it on its top edge similar to the apron of ladies who ride on horseback. On the priest's back there were joined to the belt two pieces like two wide straps, one opposite each shoulder. He lifted these up upon his two shoulders so that they hung down in front of him before his breast, and because they were joined to the rings in the breast-plate they were held fast in front of

him upon his heart so that they could not fall off his shoulders backwards, just as is explained in this section (v. 28). Thus they lay on his back in an erect position and then passed over his shoulders and the two onyx stones were fixed on them, one stone upon each shoulder-piece.
אל שני קצותיו AT THE TWO EXTREMITIES THEREOF — on the width of the ephod; for its width was equal only to that of the priest's back (and did not go entirely round his body, so that one may well speak of the two extremities of the ephod), and its height was up to the elbows — which they call coudes in old French — and not higher, because it is said (Ezekiel 44:18) "they shall not gird themselves (בַּיְזָע)," i. e. they shall not gird themselves in the place where one perspires (במקום זיעה) namely, not higher than their elbows and not lower than their loins, but only by their elbows (Zevachim 18b).
וחבר IT — the ephod — SHALL BE JOINED with the two shoulder-pieces of the ephod: he shall join them below the belt with a needle and he shall not weave them together with it, but he must weave them separately and join them afterwards.

Verse 8

וחשב אפדתו This signifies, and the girdle by means of which he bedecks it (the ephod) and puts it in order for the priest and adorns him (cf. Rashi on v. 4).
אשר עליו WHICH WAS UPON IT — above on the edge of the apron: this is therefore the girdle.
כמעשהו ACCORDING TO THE WORK THEREOF — as the weaving of the apron — the work of an artist and of the five materials — so the weaving of the belt, also, was the work of an artist and of the five materials.
ממנה יהיה IT SHALL BE OF THE SAME — it shall be woven together with it, and one shall not weave it separately, and join its afterwards.

Verse 9

Verse 10

כתולדתם ACCORDING TO THEIR BIRTH — in the order in which they were born: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali upon one, and upon the other Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph and Benjamin — the last name being written full (plene, with a י before the last letter, thus: בנימין) for that is how it is written in the passage that tells of his birth (Genesis 35:18). This gives twenty-five letters on each stone (cf. Sotah 36a).

Verse 11

מעשה חרש אבן means THE WORK OF AN ARTIFICER IN STONES. This word חרש is in close connection (i. e. in the construct state) with the word that follows it and therefore it is punctuated with Patach in its last syllable. Similar is, (Isaiah 44:13) "The עצים שֹׁרֵשׁ stretcheth out a line" i. e. the worker in wood. So, also, (Isaiah 44:12) "the worker in (שֹׁרֵשׁ) iron maketh an axe." All these examples of שֹׁרֵשׁ are in close connection with the words that follows them and are therefore punctuated with Patach.
פתוחי חותם LIKE THE ENGRAVINGS OF A SIGNET — Understand this as the Targum renders it: a distinct writing like the engraving of a signet-ring: the letters were incised in them just as one incises the seals of a ring which are used to seal letters — a clear and distinct writing.
על שמות — This is the same as בשמות "with the names of".

מסבת משבצות SURROUNDED WITH SETTINGS [OF GOLD] — Thou shalt make the stones to be surrounded by gold settings: the meaning is that they should make as a setting for each stone a kind of indentation in the gold, of the same size as the stone and sink it in the setting; thus the setting surrounds the stone on all sides. That setting they attached to the shoulder-pieces of the ephod.

Verse 12

לזכרון FOR A MEMORIAL — so that the Holy One, blessed be He, will see the names of the tribes written before Him and He will remember their righteousness (cf. Exodus Rabbah 38:8).

Verse 13

ועשית משבצת AND THOU SHALT MAKE SETTINGS — two settings, for the minimum number of settings (the plural) is two. In this section it explains to you only part of their purpose, whilst in the section dealing with the breast-plate it completes for you the explanation about them.

Verse 14

שרשרת זהב means CHAINS OF GOLD — the word being the same as שלשלאות (the letters ל and ר being interchangeable, as in ארמנות for אלמנות; cf. the Aramaic ארמלתא)
מגבלות means AT THE END OF THE BORDER (גבול) of the breast-plate תעשה אותם SHALT THOU MAKE THEM.
מעשה עבת OF CORD-LIKE WORK — made of plaited threads and not made of rings and hooks (somewhat like links) like those chains which are made for cisterns (to which the bucket is attached), but like those which are made for censers which are called encensiers in old French (cf. Rashi on Beitzah 22b).
ונתת את שרשרת — This means, AND THOU WILT PLACE THE CHAINS OF CORD-WORK — i. e. the chains made of cord-work — upon these settings. This is not the place where the command is laid down about making the chains nor is this the command about fixing them: the word תעשה used here does not express a command, nor does the word ונתת used here express a command, but these express the future tense. For in the chapter about the breast-plate He returns to this, and there He lays down the command about making them (v. 22) and fixing them (vv. 24—25). This is written here only to point out part of the purpose of the settings which He commanded to be made together with the ephod, and He wrote this here to tell you: these settings you will require — when you will make chains at the ends upon the breast-plate you shall put them upon these settings.

Verse 15

חשן משפט THE BREAST-PLATE OF JUDGMENT — it was so called because it atoned for any error in judgment (cf. Zevachim 88b; Jerusalem Talmud Yoma 7:5). Another explanation of why it is called “the breast-plate of משפט”, is because it makes its statements clear (definite — so that there can be no doubt about their meaning) and its promise is true; discerement in old French, (sentence of judgment). Because the word משפט is used in three senses: the contentions of the parties to the law-suit, the pronouncement of the sentence and the punishment attendant on the sentence, whether it be punishment of death or punishment of flagellation or punishment involving a monetary payment; here it is used in the sense of making its statements definite, so that this is the breast-plate with the Urim and Thummim which explains and makes its statement clear.

כמעשה אפד AFTER THE WORK OF THE EPHOD — the work of an artist and of the five materials.

Verse 16

זרת ארכו וזרת רחבו A SPAN IN LENGTH AND A SPAN IN WIDTH, being double (Exodus 39:9) and it lay on him in front over his heart, as it is said, (v. 30) "And they shall be upon Aaron's heart." It was suspended from the shoulder-pieces of the ephod which came from behind him upon his shoulders and hung over and fell down a little way in front of him, and the breast-plate was suspended from them by means of the chains and rings, as is explained in the section (vv. 22—29).

Verse 17

ומלאת בו AND THOU SHALT FILL IT [WITH FILLINGS OF STONES] — Because the stones fill the hollows of the settings which were specially made for them it calls them by the term מלואים "fillings".

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

משבצים זהב יהיו SET IN GOLD SHALL THEY — the rows — BE במלאותם IN THEIR SETTINGS — surrounded by gold settings in depth of such a size that each shall be filled by the thickness of the stone. This is the meaning of במלאותם, "in their fillings": of such a size as will be filled by the thickness of the stones shall be the depth of the settings, neither more nor less.

Verse 21

איש על שמו EVERY ONE WITH HIS NAME — As the order in which they were born shall be the order of the stones: a sardius for Reuben, a topaz for Simeon, and so in the case of all of them.

Verse 22

על החשן means [AND THOU SHALT MAKE] FOR THE BREAST-PLATE (not upon it), — in order to fasten them (the plaited chains) on its rings, as is explained further on in the section.
שרשת — This is the same expression as the roots (שֹׁרֶשׁ) of a tree which hold the tree firm so that it may be held and kept fixed in the ground. Thus, also, these roots, as it were, shall hold the breast-plate firm because from them shall it hang on the ephod. These were really the two plaited chains which are mentioned above in the section on the settings (v. 14). Indeed, Menachem ben Seruk actually explained the word שרשרות as well in the sense of roots and he said that the second ר was redundant, just as the ם in שלשם and the ם in ריקם. I, however, do not agree with his statement, but I am of opinion that שַׁרְשֶׁרֶת in the Hebrew language is the equivalent of שַׁלְשֶׁלֶת in the Mishnaic language (Mishnah Kelim 14:3) (cf. Rashi on v. 14).
גבלת — This is the same as מגבלות used above, (v. 14) meaning that thou shalt fix them in the rings which will be on the border (גבול) of the

breast-plate. Wherever the word גבול occurs it has the meaning of end; à sommel in old French
מעשה עבת means PLAITED WORK.

Verse 23

על החשן means [AND THOU SHALT MAKE] FOR THE BREAST-PLATE (not upon it), — in order to fix them on it. And it would not be correct to say that this means that they should originally be made upon it (על), for if this were so why should it again say in this verse, "And thou shall put the two rings [on the two extremities]"? Would they not already have been lying upon it if they had been made together with the breast-plate? It should rather have written at the beginning of the verse, "And thou shalt make at the ends of the breast-plate two rings of gold." In the case of chains, also, you must explain it similarly.
על שני קצת החשן ON THE TWO EXTREMITIES OF THE BREAST-PLATE — on its two corners that are close by his neck, on the right and on the left, which come opposite the shoulder-pieces of the ephod.

Verse 24

ונתת את שתי עבתת הזהב AND THOU SHALT PUT THE TWO עבתת OF GOLD — These are the selfsame שרשרת גבלות "chains on the ends" which are written about above (v. 14). There, however, it did not specify the place where they were to be fixed on the breast-plate, stating only that the ends were to be put on the settings; now it tells you that one should insert them in the rings which were on the breast-plate. And you can be certain that these are identical with the former ones, because in the section אלה פקודי they are not mentioned twice (in two separate paragraphs).

Verse 25

ואת שתי קצות means, AND THE TWO EXTREMITIES OF שתי עבתת THE TWO PLAITED CHAINS — (Rashi points out that קצות is in the construct state) — i. e. the two ends of each cord
תתן על שתי המשבצות THOU SHALT FASTEN IN THE TWO SETTINGS — These are the selfsame settings which are mentioned above in the paragraph that is placed between the section on the breast-plate and the section on the ephod. There it did not explain their purpose and their position; now, however, it explains that he should fix into them the ends of the plaited chains which had been inserted in the rings of the breast-plate on the right and on the left near the neck. The two ends of the right chain he fixed in the setting on the right, and similarly in that on the left he fixed the two ends of the left chain.
ונתת AND THOU SHALT PUT the settings.
על כתפות האפד ON THE SHOULDER-PIECES OF THE EPHOD, one setting on this shoulder-piece and one on that. Consequently the shoulder-pieces of the ephod hold the breast-plate up so that it may not fall, and from them did it hang. But the lower edge of the breast-plate would still come and go (swing to and fro) and strike against his stomach and would not lie closely upon it; therefore two more rings were needed for its lower edge, as it goes on to explain.
אל מול פניו IN THE FOREPART THEREOF — i. e. in the forepart of the ephod. meaning that he should not put the settings on that surface of the shoulder-pieces which faced the מעיל, but on the upper surface which faced the outside. It is that latter surface which is called the forepart of the ephod, because the surface which is not seen, being turned towards the מעיל, cannot be called the פנים, the front.

Verse 26

על שני קצות החשן IN THE TWO EXTREMITIES OF THE BREAST-PLATE — These are its two lower corners on the right and on the left.
על שפתו אשר על עבר האפוד ביתה ON THE BORDER THEREOF WHICH IS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE EPHOD INWARD — Here you have two indications of the position of the rings: one, that he should place them on the two ends of the lower edge, for it was this which was over against the ephod, because its upper edge was not over against the ephod since it was close to the neck and the ephod was placed a little above his loins (consequently the upper edge of the breastplate which was near the priest's neck was nowhere near the ephod which was girded round him just above the loins. See Rashi on v. 7). It gives another indication by the use of the word ביתה : that, he should not fix them on that side of the breast-plate which faced outside, but on that side which faced inward, because it is said ביתה, inward. It was that side which was turned toward the ephod, for the ends of the lower edge of that side of the breast-plate really lay upon the ephod since the priest tied the belt of the ephod around him and the apron was folded over in front of the priest upon his loins and upon a part of his stomach on both sides as far as against the ends of the breast-plate (i. e. the corners of the lower edge), the ends of which lay upon it.

Verse 27

על שתי כתפות האפוד מלמטה. ON THE TWO SHOULDER-PIECES OF THE EPHOD UNDERNEATH — underneath because the settings were placed on the upper ends of the shoulder-pieces of the ephod which came upon his shoulders beside his throat and which were folded over his shoulders and fell down in front of him; and the rings mentioned here He commanded to be put on the other end of each shoulder-piece which was joined on the ephod. This is the meaning of what is said לעמת מחברתו, "over against the joining thereof", i. e. close by the spot where they were joined on to the ephod, namely, a little above the girdle, for the place of joining was over against the girdle. Thus these rings were placed a little above the place where the shoulder-straps began to rise from the girdle, and this is the meaning of what is said, "above the girdle of the ephod". These were thus opposite (i. e. on a level with) the end (the lower edge) of the breastplate (but, of course, on the priest's back, whilst the breast-plate lay in front of him). Now they placed a thread of blue purple in those rings and in the rings of the breast-plate and fastened them (the pair of rings) together by means of that thread on the right and on the left so that the lower edge of the breast-plate should not move forward and then return backward (should not move to and fro) and strike against his stomach. It followed, therefore, that it (the breast-plate) lay well upon the "Meil".
ממול פניו TOWARDS THE FOREPART THEREOF — i. e. on the outer side.

Verse 28

ויכסו — This is an expression for joining. Similar in meaning is, (Psalms 31:21) "[Thou hidest them] from the רֶכֶס of men", i. e. from the union of companies of wicked people. Similar is, (Isaiah 40:4) "And the רכסים shall become a plain" — i. e. the mountains which are close (almost joined) to one another so that it is not possible to descend into the valley between them except with great difficulty, since, in consequence of their closeness to each other, the valley is precipitous and deep — these רכסים, connected mountains, shall become a level plain and easy to travel upon.
להיות על חשב האפוד THAT IT MAY BE UPON THE GIRDLE OF THE EPHOD — that the breast-plate (not the ring) may be attached to the girdle of the ephod.

ולא יזז SO THAT [THE BREAST-PLATE] BE NOT LOOSENED — יזז is an expression for "breaking away". It is an Arabic expression according to the opinion of Dunash ben Labrat.

Verse 29

Verse 30

את האורים ואת התמים THE URIM AND THE THUMMIM — This was an inscription of the Proper Name of God which was placed between the folds (i. e. the two pieces forming the front and back) of the breast-plate through which it (the breast-plate) made its statements clear (lit., illuminated its words; מאיר from אור, light, this being an allusion to the אורים) and its promises true (מתמם from the root תמם, an allusion to תמים) (Yoma 73b). In the second Temple there was certainly the breast-plate (although other objects employed in the Temple Service were missing) for it was impossible that the High Priest should have lacked a garment, but that Divine Name was not within it. It was on account of the inscription which constituted the Urim and Thummim and which enabled it to give decisions that it was called "judgment", as it is said, (Numbers 27:21) "And he shall enquire for him by the judgment of the Urim" (Numbers 27:21).
את משפט בני ישראל [AND AARON SHALL BEAR] THE JUDGMENT OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL — the object by means of which they are judged and admonished whether they should do a particular thing or whether they should not do it. But according to the Midrashic statement (Zevachim 88b) that the breast-plate atoned for those who pervert judgment it was called "judgment" in allusion to the pardon thus given for perverse judgment.

Verse 31

את מעיל האפוד THE ROBE OF THE EPHOD — i. e. the robe over which the ephod was placed to serve the purpose of a girdle.
כליל תכלת signifies THE WHOLE OF IT BLUE PURPLE, meaning that there should be no other material mixed with it (Yoma 71b).

Verse 32

והיה פי ראשו AND THE HOLE IN THE HEAD OF IT SHALL BE — the hole of the Robe which is at its top — that is, the opening which serves as a receptacle for the neck,
בתוכו IN THE MIDST THEREOF — Understand this as the Targum renders it: כפיל לגויה "turned in towards the inside" — the turn-in shall serve as its seam. It was weaver's work (woven as such with the Robe) and not made with a needle.
כפי תחרא AS IT WERE THE HOLE OF A HABERGEON — This informs us that their habergeons had the neck-opening turned in.
לא יקרע means SO THAT IT BE NOT RENT — Indeed, whoever rends it, transgresses thereby a negative commandment because this is among the number of the negative commands contained in the Torah. The same is the case with (v. 28) "that the breast-plate be not loosened", and similarly, (Exodus 25:15) "they shall not depart from it", which is said of the staves of the ark (Yoma 72a).

Verse 33

רמוני POMEGRANATES — They were round and hollow, similar to that kind of pomegranates which are made like (have the form of) a hen's egg.
ופעמני זהב AND BELLS OF GOLD — bells, together with the clappers in them.

בתוכם סביב IN THE MIDST OF THEM ROUND ABOUT — i. e. between them (the pomegranates) all the way round the hem: between every two pomegranates there was one bell attached hanging from the hem of the Robe (cf. Zevachim 88b).

Verse 34

פעמן זהב ורמון פעמן זהב ורמון means a golden bell and a pomegranate next to it.

Verse 35

ולא ימות THAT HE DIE NOT — From what is included in this negative statement you may infer the positive: if he has these garments on him he will not incur death; consequently if he enters the Sanctuary lacking one of these garments he incurs death at the hands of God (cf. Sanhedrin 83).

Verse 36

ציץ — This was a kind of golden Plate, two fingers in breadth, going round the forehead from ear to ear (Shabbat 63b).

Verse 37

על פתיל תכלת [AND THOU SHALT PUT IT] ON A BLUE PURPLE STRING — but in another passage (Exodus 39:31) is states, "And they put upon it (upon the Plate) a string of blue purple (so that the Plate was beneath the string, not upon it as is here commanded)! Then again, it is written here, "and it (the Plate) shall be upon the mitre", whilst further on (v. 38) it says, "And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead"! And in the Treatise on the Slaughter of the Sacrifices (Zevachim 19a) we learn: "His (the High Priest's) hair was visible between the Plate and the mitre, whereon he placed the Tephillin", thus informing us that the mitre was above on the crown of the head and was not so deep that the entire head went into it right down to the forehead, and that the Plate was beneath it with a space between them. Consequently the Plate was not on the mitre as seems to be stated in this verse! But I say that (cf. Rashi on Exodus 39:31 ואומר אני וגו׳) the strings were in holes and hung from it (from the Plate) at its two ends and at its middle point, six in these three places (i. e. one string in each hole, the centre of each string resting on the bottom point of the hole, the three thus forming six). Thus, at each hole, there was one string on top of the Plate — outside it, and one inside (between the Plate and the forehead). He tied the ends of the strings, the three of them, behind the neck; it follows therefore that the length of the Plate and the strings that were at its ends together encompassed his skull. The middle string which was on its top edge bound together with the ends of the two which were at the extremities of the Plate, passed over the breadth of the head above (over the crown). Consequently it (the Plate, together with the strings) formed a kind of helmet. It is with reference to the middle string that it states, "And it (the string just mentioned in the verse; not the Plate as was assumed) shall be upon the mitre", for he placed the Plate, with the strings already tied in this manner, upon his head as a kind of helmet passing it over the mitre, and the middle string held it (the Plate) firm so that it could not fall, and thus the Plate hung in front of his forehead and did not fall lower down. In this way all these verses find their explanation — the string being on the Plate, the Plate on the string, and the string on the mitre above (cf. Chullin 138a).

Verse 38

ונשא אהרן AND AARON SHALL BEAR [THE INIQUITY OF THE HOLY THINGS] — The word נשא is an expression of forgiveness, but nevertheless it does not move from (lose) its ordinary meaning of "bearing": Aaron bears the load of iniquity so that it follows that the iniquity is lifted off the holy things.
את עון הקדשים [HE SHALL BEAR] THE INIQUITY OF THE HOLY THINGS — atoning for the blood and fat of sacrifices which had been offered when they were unclean, as we have learned (Pesachim 17b; Yoma 7a): What iniquity is it that it (the Plate) bears (atones for)? If you say that it is the iniquity caused by פגול — but it is already said in reference to this, (Leviticus 19:7) "it cannot be atoned for"! If you say it is the iniquity caused by נותר — but it is said in reference to this, (Leviticus 7:18) "It shall not under any circumstances be accounted [unto him] as a sacrifice"! Nor can one say that it (the Plate) atoned for the iniquity of the priest who offered a sacrifice when he was unclean because it is stated here, "[shall bear] the iniquity of the holy things" and it does not state "the iniquity of those who offer the sacrifices" — thus it (the Plate) atones only in so far as to make the sacrifice a fitting one if there had been anything irregular about it.
והיה על מצחו תמיד — It is not possible to say that this means that it should be on his forehead continually because, as a matter of fact, it was on it only at the time of the sacrificial service. But the word תמיד is to be connected with the words that follow: "continually to make atonement for them", even if it be not then upon his forehead, i. e. when the High Priest was not officiating, and therefore was not wearing the Plate, at that time when the unclean animal was being sacrificed by an ordinary priest. But according to the opinion (if we adopt the opinion) of him (Rabbi Judah) who says that only whilst it was on his forehead did it atone and effect pardon, and that if it was not on his forehead it did not effect pardon, the following inference must be derived from the phrase על מצחו תמיד: it informs us that he must constantly touch it whilst it is on his forehead, so that he should not divert his attention from it (Yoma 7b).

Verse 39

ושבצת means make them with many checkered figures, and entirely of fine linen.

Verse 40

ולבני אהרן תעשה כתנת AND FOR AARON'S SONS THOU SHALT MAKE INNER GARMENTS — these four garments and no more; viz., the three mentioned in this verse, — the inner garment, the girdle and the מגבעות which are identical with what is elsewhere called the mitre, — and the breeches prescribed later in this section (v. 42).

Verse 41

והלבשת אתם את אהרן AND THOU SHALT PUT THEM ON AARON — i. e. those which are mentioned in connection with Aaron: the breast-plate, the ephod, the Robe, the inner garment of checker-work, the mitre, the girdle and the Plate, and the breeches which are prescribed later for all of them (for all the priest's and therefore for Aaron also).
ואת בניו אתו [AND THOU SHALT PUT THEM ON AARON …] AND ON HIS SONS WITH HIM — i. e. put on them those garments which are prescribed for them.
ומשחת אתם AND THOU SHALT ANOINT THEM — viz., Aaron and his sons, with the oil of anointing.

ומלאת את ידם AND THOU SHALT CONSECRATE THEM (more lit., fill their hand) — wherever the term "filling the hand" is used it denotes the installation ceremony performed when one enters for the first time into an office, as a sign that he is entitled to it from that day and henceforth. And in the old French language — when a person is appointed to the charge of a matter, the Prince puts into his hand a leathern glove which they call "gant" in old French and by that means he gives him a right to the matter, and they term that transmission of the glove and the office, revestir in old French This is the connection between the literal and the metaphorical meaning of "filling the hand".

Verse 42

ועשה להם AND MAKE FOR THEM — for Aaron and his sons —
מכנסי בד LINEN BREECHES — this makes eight garments for the High Priest and four for the ordinary priest.

Verse 43

והיו על אהרן AND THEY SHALL BE UPON AARON — "they" means all these garments (not only the breeches which are the last-mentioned garments); upon Aaron shall be those which are proper to him,
ועל בניו AND UPON HIS SONS, those prescribed for them.
בבאם אל אהל מועד WHEN THEY COME INTO THE APPOINTED TENT — into the Temple, and similarly when they come into the Tabernacle.
ומתו AND THEY DIE — thus you may learn that he who officiates lacking any of these garments is liable to death (Midrash Tanchuma, Achrei Mot 6).
חקת עולם לו AN ORDINANCE TO HIM FOR EVER — Wherever it is said "an ordinance forever" it is an enactment for the immediate present time and for future generations, and the phrase is used to make invalid thereby (through the fact that this phrase is used) any rite where the details prescribed are not fully carried out (cf. Menachot 19a).

Chapter 29

Verse 1

לקח This is the same as קח (the imperative, "Take thou" and must not be regarded as the infinitive). There are two forms of the root: one is קח and the other לקח, both having the same meaning.
פר אחד ONE BULLOCK — to atone for the incident of worshipping the golden calf which is of the bullock species (cf. Sifra on Leviticus 9:2).

Verse 2

ולחם מצות וחלת מצת... ורקיקי מצות AND UNLEAVENED BREAD, AND PIERCED CAKES UNLEAVENED … AND WAFERS UNLEAVENED — Here you have these three kinds: "satured" with scalding water, and pierced cakes, and wafers. The לחם מצות, "unleavened bread" mentioned here is that which is termed further on in this section (v. 23) חלת לחם שמן, "pierced cake of oiled bread", being so termed because they put unto the saturated dough as much oil as they put into the pieced cakes and wafers together (Menachot 89a). Of each of these kinds there were brought ten cakes (Menachot 76a).
בלולת בשמן [CAKES] MINGLED WITH OIL — whilst they were still meal they poured oil into them and mixed them up (Menachot 75a).
משחים בשמן ANOINTED WITH OIL — after they were baked they anointed them in the form of a Greek Chi (X), which is formed like our נ (Menachot 74b and Rashi thereon; Menachot 75a).

Verse 3

והקרבת אתם AND THOU SHALT OFFER THEM (lit., bring them near) to the court of the Tabernacle on the day when it will be first erected.

Verse 4

ורחצת AND THOU SHALT WASH [THEM] — This signifies the immersion of the entire body (cf. Targum Jonathan).

Verse 5

ואפדת AND THOU SHALT FASTEN [THE EPHOD ON] — adorn and arrange the girdle and the apron around him.

Verse 6

נזר הקדש THE DIADEM OF HOLINESS — This refers to the Plate.
על המצנפת UPON THE MITRE, as I have explained above (Exodus 28:37) — by means of the middle string and the two strings at its (the Plate's) ends which were, the three of them, tied together behind his neck he placed it upon the mitre as a kind of helmet.

Verse 7

ומשחת אתו AND THOU SHALT ANOINT HIM — This anointing also, was in the form of a X: he put a drop of oil on his head and another drop between his eyebrows and joined them with his finger into this shape (Keritot 5b).

Verse 8

Verse 9

והיתה להם AND SHALL BE UNTO THEM This "filling of hands" shall be for an everlasting priesthood.
ומלאת AND THOU SHALT "FILL" by means of these following matters
יד אהרן ויד בניו AARON'S HAND AND HIS SONS' HANDS in the appointment and assigment to the priesthood.

Verse 10

Verse 11

פתח אהל מועד BY THE ENTRANCE OF THE APPOINTED TENT — i. e. in the court of the Tabernacle which was in front of the entrance.

Verse 12

על קרנות UPON THE HORNS — on top of the horns actually (the blood was not to be sprinkled from below so as to reach the horns but was to be placed by the finger actually upon the horns) (Zevachim 53a).
ואת כל הדם AND ALL THE BLOOD i. e. all the remainder of the blood (that which is left after some of it had been placed upon the horns of the altar as just stated).

אל יסוד המזבח AT THE BOTTOM OF THE ALTAR — A kind of projection that formed a receptacle was made right round it after it had risen to a height of one cubit from the ground (Sukkah 45a).

Verse 13

החלב המכסה את הקרב THE FAT THAT COVERETH THE INWARDS — this is the membrane upon the maw (Tosefta Chullin 9:3) which is called tele in old French
ואת היתרת This is the lobe of the liver which is called abris in old French
על הכבד — Take with it (with the lobe) some of the liver also (cf. Sifra, Vayikra Dibbura d'Nedavah, Section 14 8).

Verse 14

תשרף באש SHALT THOU BURN WITH FIRE — We do not find that any "outside" sin offering was to be burnt except this (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 9:11).

Verse 15

Verse 16

וזרקת AND THOU SHALT SPRINKLE IT with a vessel: he held the basin and cast blood from it towards the horn in such a manner that it (the blood) showed on both sides of it. No offering except the sin-offering alone required that its blood should be smeared with the finger, but other sacrifices required neither "horn" nor "finger" (did not require that the blood should be placed on the horn of the altar by the fingers), for the sprinkling of their blood had to be upon the lower half of the altar, and he (the priest) therefore did not mount the ascent leading to the top of the altar but he stood on the ground and sprinkled the blood (Zevachim 53b).
סביב ROUND ABOUT — This is how it is explained in the Treatise on Slaughtering the Sacrifices (Zevachim 53b): that סביב, "round about" signifies nothing more than that there were to be two sprinklings so made that they should constitute four — one on this corner and one at that which was diagonally opposite it, and so that each sprinkling showed on both sides of the corner, on this and on that side; it followed therefore that the blood was placed on the four sides round about, and for this reason it is here termed סביב.

Verse 17

על נתחיו [AND PUT THEM] TO ITS PIECES — i. e. together with (על) its pieces — added to the other pieces.

Verse 18

ריח נחוח AS A PLEASING ODOUR — as a gratification of spirit before Me — that I commanded and My will was carried out (Zevachim 46b).
אשה AN OFFERING MADE BY FIRE a term connected with the word אש, fire: it denotes the burning of the parts which had been placed on the fire (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 1:9).

Verse 19

Verse 20

תנוך — This is the inner cartilage which is within the ear, which they call tendrons in old French (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 14:14).
בהן ידם — i. e. the thumb; and the blood was placed on the middle joint (Chullin 11a).

Verse 21

Verse 22

החלב THE FAT — This means the fat of the gut, or, (according to the opinion of Rabbi Ishmael,) of the maw (Chullin 49b; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 3:3).
והאליה AND THE FAT TAIL — This is the portion of the animal from the kidneys and lower down, as is explained in Leviticus, (3:9) because it is said, "[the whole fat tail], he shall take it off hard by the back bone (עָצָה)" i. e. by the place where the kidneys give counsel (עָצָה) (Chullin 11a). In the case of the fat portions of the bullock the "fat tail" is not mentioned, for the "fat tail" was offered only in the case of a male or female lamb and a ram, but an ox and a goat do not require the "fat tail" to be offered.
ואת שוק הימין AND THE RIGHT SHOULDER — We do not find that burning if prescribed for the right shoulder together with the fat parts except in the case of this alone.
כי איל מלאים הוא FOR IT IS A RAM OF מלאים — of שלמים (usually translated peace-offerings): מלואים has the meaning of "perfection" (מלא meaning "full", so that מלואים is synonymous with שלמים) — something that is perfect in all respects. Scripture informs us that the מלואים (consecration sacrifices) are to be regarded as שלמים-sacrifices, in that they, like the שלמים, promote peace (שלום) between the altar and him who carries out the sacrifical rite (the priest) and the owner of the animal (the worshipper who brings the sacrifice"). Therefore, says God, in this case I make it a condition that the breast shall belong as a portion to him who performs the sacrificial rite, viz., Moses, who officiated at the installation into office (cf. v. 26). — The remainder, Aaron and his sons ate because they were the "owners", as is expressly set forth in this section (cf. Sifra, Vayikra Dibbura d'Nedavah, Chapter 16 2; Midrash Tanchuma, Tzav 4).

Verse 23

וככר לחם AND ONE LOAF OF BREAD — of the cakes (mentioned in Exodus 29:2) (Menachot 78a).
וחלת לחם שמן AND ONE PIERCED CAKE OF OILED BREAD — of the "saturated" kind.
ורקיק AND ONE WAFER — of the wafers there mentioned: i. e. one out of the ten which were comprised in each of these different kinds of bread (Menachot 76a; cf. Rashi on Exodus 29:2). We do not find that any heave-offering of bread brought with a sacrifice was burnt except this alone, for the heave-offering of the bread brought with the thanksgiving offering and with the ram of the Nazarite was given to the priest (and therefore not burnt) together with the breast and the shoulder, whilst of this the breast alone was given as a portion to Moses, as the officiating priest.

Verse 24

על כפי אהרן … והנפת [AND THOU SHALT PUT ALL] IN THE HANDS OF AARON … AND THOU SHALT WAVE THEM — The rule is that both of them take part in the waving ceremony, the "owner" and the priest. How is this done? The priest places his hand beneath the "owner's" hand, and thus does the waving (Menachot 61b) — and in case of this offering Aaron and his sons were the "owners" and Moses the priest, and therefore Scripture enacts as stated here.
תנופה A WAVE OFFERING — He moved it about horizontally in all directions to the glory of Him to Whom belong the four quarters of the world. This waving was symbolical of preventing and making of none effect misfortune and destructive winds. Then he moved it upwards and downward to the glory of Him to Whom belong heaven and earth and this was symbolical of keeping away injurious dews (Menachot 62a).

Verse 25

על העלה BESIDES THE BURNT OFFERING — besides the first ram which you had already offered up as a burnt offering.
לריח ניחוח AS A PLEASING ODOUR — as a gratification of spirit to Him Who gave the command and found that His will was carried out (cf. Sifra, Vayikra Dibbura d'Nedavah, Chapter 6 10).
אשה AN OFFERING MADE BY FIRE given over to the fire.
לה׳ TO THE LORD — to the Name of the Omnipresent.

Verse 26

Verse 27

וקדשת את חזה התנופה ואת שוק התרומה וגו׳ AND THOU SHALT SANCTIFY THE BREAST OF THE WAVE OFFERING AND THE SHOULDER OF THE HEAVE OFFERING etc. — Declare these portions of the animal to have a sacred character for future generations in that the heaving of them and the waving of them shall be practised in respect of the breast and the shoulder of all peace-offerings, but the similarity between the שלמים and the מלואים shall not extend to burning the shoulder as was done in the case of the מלואים but (v. 28) "it shall be for Aaron and his sons" to be eaten.
הונף WHICH IS WAVED — an expression for moving to and fro in a horizontal direction; venteler in old French
הורם WHICH WAS HEAVED — an expression for moving up and down.

Verse 28

לחק עולם מאת בני ישראל AS AN ASSIGNED PORTION FROM THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL — because peace-offerings belong to the "owner", and the breast and the shoulder shall they give to the priest.
כי תרומה הוא FOR IT IS A HEAVE OFFERING — i.e. the breast and the shoulder form a heave-offering.

Verse 29

לבניו אחריו [SHALL BE] FOR HIS SONS AFTER HIM — for him who comes after him in this high office.
למשחה means to be raised to dignity by means of them. For sometimes the word משח is used in the sense of "dignity", as in (Numbers 18:8), "to thee I have given them as a dignity (למשחה)", and (I Chronicles 16:22) "Touch ye not my nobles (משיחי)" (cf. Rashi on Exodus 30:29).

ולמלא בם את ידם AND TO BE CONSECRATED BY THEM — through these garments he is to be invested with the high-priesthood (cf. Rashi on Yoma 73a).

Verse 30

שבעת ימים SEVEN DAYS in succession, on such a High Priest's installation,
ילבשם הכהן THE PRIEST SHALL PUT THEM ON — i. e. he who, from among his sons, will rise up in his stead in the high-priesthood at the time when they will appoint him to be High Priest.
אשר יבא אל אהל מועד WHO WILL COME INTO THE APPOINTED TENT — These words qualify the word הכהן so that it refers to that priest who is designated to enter into the innermost part (the words לפני ולפנים in the Rashi text correspond to בקדש in the Biblical text) of the Sanctuary on the Day of Atonement — and this must mean the High Priest, since the sacrificial service on the Day of Atonement was not valid unless performed by him (Yoma 73a).
תחתיו מבניו IN HIS STEAD FROM AMONG HIS SONS — This informs us that if the High Priest has a son who can fill his place they shall appoint him High Priest in his stead (Sifra, Acharei Mot, Chapter 8 5; cf. Rashi on Yoma 72b).
[הכהן תחתיו מבניו — From here (from this phraseology) we have a proof that the word הכהן is everywhere a participle — meaning "he who is actually acting as the officiant"; therefore the tonic accent תביר on the word הכהן connects it with the word following it.].

Verse 31

במקום קדש IN A HOLY PLACE in the court of the tent of meeting because these peace-offerings were holy in the highest degree (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 6:9).

Verse 32

פתח אהל מועד BY THE ENTRANCE OF THE APPOINTED TENT — the whole court is thus named (cf. Rashi on Exodus 29:11).

Verse 33

ואכלו אתם AND THEY SHALL EAT THOSE THINGS i. e. Aaron and his sons because they are the "owners" of them (cf. Pesachim 59b).
אשד כפר בהם THROUGH WHOM THERE WAS EXPIATED everything that was strange and objectionable.
למלא את ידם TO INITIATE THEM INTO OFFICE by means of this ram and bread.
לקדש אתם TO SANCTIFY THEM — for by means of this initiation-sacrifice they were installed and sanctified to the priesthood.
כי קדש הם BECAUSE THEY ARE HOLY — i. e. holy in the highest degree. From this we derive the prohibition against a "stranger" (a non-priest) eating anything that is holy in the highest degree (Makkot 18b), since Scripture assigns a reason for the matter (why a stranger may not eat of these), viz., because they are holy in the highest degree (cf. Pesachim 24a).

Verse 34

Verse 35

ועשית לאהרן ולבניו ככה AND THUS SHALT (i. e. must) THOU DO TO AARON AND HIS SONS — Scripture recites a second time in this general statement all that has been already commanded in order to impede the validity of the

rites; i. e. that if they do not do this and a single thing is omitted of all that is prescribed in this section their initiation to be priests must be regarded as not having taken place and their act of sacrifice is consequently invalid (Yoma 5a).
אתכה is the same as (another form of): אוֹתָךְ "thee".
שבעת ימים תמלא ידם SEVEN DAYS SHALT THOU CONSECRATE THEM in this manner and by means of these sacrifices on each day.

Verse 36

על הכפרים means for the purpose of expiation — to expiate for the altar for all that is "strange" (not holy) and objectionable that may happened to it. Now since it is said. (v. 35) "Seven days shalt thou consecrate them" after having stated that if a single thing is omitted the ceremony is invalid, I can infer nothing more than that this alludes to a thing that is offered on account of them personally as, for example, the rams and the bread, but as regards anything that is offered on account of the altar as, for example, the bullock, which is intended to serve as expiation for the altar, we cannot infer from that verse that if this is omitted the ceremony of initiation is invalid; consequently this verse is necessary to inform us of this. An explanation in Torath Cohanim (the Sifra) states: atonement for the altar was necessary because perhaps a man had donated for work in connection with the construction of the Tabernacle or the altar something which he had stolen (Sifra, Tzav, Mechilta d'Miluim 1 15).
וחטאת — The Targum translates this by ותדכי AND THOU SHALT PURIFY [THE ALTAR]; the expression for placing upon the altar the blood that is placed there with the finger is called אֲשָׁא (hence it is followed by the preposition על "upon").
ומשחת אתו AND THOU SHALT ANOINT IT with the oil of anointing: every anointing was done in the form of a Greek Chi (X).

Verse 37

והיה המזבח קדש AND THE ALTAR SHALL BE [MOST] HOLY — and in what consists its holiness? In this: כל הנגע במזבח יקדש that WHATSOEVER TOUCHETH THE ALTAR SHALL BECOME HOLY — that even a sacrifice which is really invalid that has been brought upon it — even that does the altar sanctify making it a valid sacrifice in so far that it must not be taken down from the altar. Now since it is said, "Anything that toucheth the altar shall become holy", I might infer that this applies to a thing whether it was fitting to be an offering at the time when it was brought into the Sanctuary or whether it was not so fitting as, for example, in the latter case, something the disqualification of which did not happen within the Sanctuary itself but had happened before it was brought there, such as, an animal, male or female, with which sexual sin had been committed, or an animal which had been set aside as a sacrifice to an idol, or one which had been worshipped as a god, or one which showed signs of incapacity to live owing to certain diseases (technically termed טרפה) and animals similar to these (with similar disqualifications); consequently it states, "Now this is that which thou shalt offer [upon the altar]", which follows immediately after this (in v. 38). Now how is it in the case of the burnt-offering which is mentioned in the next verse as something commanded to be brought upon the altar? It must be fitted to be brought upon the altar! So, also, the preceding statement, "Whatever [touches the altar shall become holy]", refers only to whatever was fitting, i. e. what was already fitting to be brought upon the altar and became disqualified only after it had been brought into the fore-court of the Sanctuary, as, for example, that which had been left over night (the blood or fat of a sacrifice which had been left until the morning without

having been placed upon the altar), or that which, before it had been placed upon the altar, had been taken (lit., had gone forth) outside the forecourt, or that which had become unclean, or an animal which had been slaughtered with the intention to sprinkle the blood or to burn the fat or to eat the flesh outside the prescribed period or outside the prescribed place, and animals similar to these (Zevachim 83b).

Verse 38

Verse 39

Verse 40

ועשרן סלת A TENTH DEAL OF FLOUR — i. e. a tenth part of an ephah: a capacity of forty three and a fifth eggs (cf. Rashi on Exodus 16:36).
בשמן כתית [MINGLED] WITH OIL, BEATEN — Not to make this obligatory is it stated "beaten" but to make it lawful if such oil be at all used. Since it is stated, (Exodus 27:20) "beaten for the light" and the implication is that for the light it must be beaten and not for the meal-offerings, one might think that this is expressly stated in order to declare it unfitting for the meal-offerings; therefore it states here "beaten", meaning that for the meal-offerings beaten oil may be used if one so wishes. And it is stated "beaten for the light", only to exclude the meal-offerings from the command: that beaten oil is not obligatory for them — that oil obtained from olives ground in a mill is also permissible for them (Menachot 86b).
רבע ההין THE FOURTH PART OF A HIN — three logs.
ונסך AND A LIBATION — for the bowls, as we learn in Treatise Sukkah 48a: there were two silver bowls above the altar pierced with holes, as it were like two slender nostrils. He poured the wine into these and it ran through and gushed forth by way of this "nostril", falling upon the top of the altar. Thence it ran down into the subterranean channels in the case of the altar in the Temple, but in the case of the copper altar in the Tabernacle it ran down from the altar to the ground.

Verse 41

לריח ניחח FOR A PLEASING ODOUR — This is said in reference to the meal-offering just mentioned and not only to the lamb mentioned in the first half of the verse, for also the meal-offering brought with the libation was all of it entirely burnt, unlike other meal-offerings. The order when offering them was: first the limbs of the animal and afterwards the meal-offering, since it is said (Leviticus 23:27) "burnt-offering and meal-offering".

Verse 42

תמיד A CONTINUAL [BURNT-OFFERING] i.e. from day to day: there shall not be an interval of a day between them (between two successive morning or afternoon offerings; cf. Rashi on Exodus 27:20).
אשר אועד לכם WHERE I SHALL BE MET BY YOU — when I shall appoint a place of meeting to speak unto you I shall appoint it there (at the entrance of the tent of meeting) as the spot to which to come. Some of our Rabbis learn from this that it was from above the copper altar that the Holy One, blessed be He, spoke with Moses after the Tabernacle was erected, for this was at the entrance; but some say that He spoke from above the

cover of the Ark (the כפרת), as it is said, (Exodus 25:22) "And I will speak to thee from above the cover", and that the words "where I shall be met by you" which are said here are not used in reference to the altar which was at the entrance of the tent of meeting, but in reference to the tent of meeting itself which is mentioned in this verse (so that the meaning is: "at the entrance of the tent of meeting where, viz., in the tent of meeting, I shall be met by you"; cf. ברייתא דמלאכת המשכן at the end).

Verse 43

ונעדתי שמה AND I WILL BE MET THERE — I will come together with them in a conversation as a king who appoints a place of meeting where he will speak with his subjects.
ונקדש AND IT — the Tabernacle — SHALL BE SANCTIFIED,
בכבדי BY MY GLORY — for my Shechina shall rest there. A Midrashic comment is: Read not here בִּכְבוֹדִי "by My Glory", but בִּכְבוּדַי, "through My honoured ones". Here He gave him some slight intimation of the death of Aaron's sons on the day when it (the Tabernacle) would be erected. This is the meaning of what Moses then said, (Leviticus 10:3) "That is what the Lord said, Through those that draw near to Me will I be sanctified". But where had he said this? Here, in the words, "and it shall be sanctified through My honoured ones" (Zevachim 115b).

Verse 44

Verse 45

Verse 46

לשכני בתכם means under the condition that I may dwell in the midst of them.

Chapter 30

Verse 1

מקטר קטרת FOR THE BURNING OF INCENSE — to raise smoke (קיטור) on it, viz., the smoke of incense.

Verse 2

Verse 3

את גגו THE ROOF THEREOF — This altar had a top but the altar of burnt-offering had no top, but they filled in the hollow space enclosed by its sides with earth wherever they encamped (cf. Mekhilta).
זר זהב A CROWN OF GOLD — an emblem of the crown of priesthood (Yoma 72b).

Verse 4

צלעתיו Here this word must signify “corners” (not “sides” as Rashi explains in Exodus 25:12), as it is translated in the Targum, since it is stated afterwards, על שני צדיו, “upon the two sides of it”, so that the phrases mean, “the two corners that are on its two sides”.
והיה (lit., “and it shall be”, not “they shall be”) — i. e. the making of these rings (this ring-work) shall be (shall serve) —
לבתים לבדים FOR PLACES FOR THE STAVES — i.e. the ring shall serve as a place for the stave (cf. Rashi on Exodus 25:27).

Verse 5

Verse 6

לפני הכפרת BEFORE THE PARTITION VEIL — But this vail was drawn across the entire width of the Tabernacle, and you may perhaps say that the altar was not to be placed exactly before (exactly in a straight line with) the Ark but might be withdrawn from the straight line to the North or to the south since in that position, too, it would be before the partition vail; therefore it states further, “before the covering of the Ark”, i. e. exactly in front of the Ark but outside the veil.

Verse 7

בהטיבו WHEN HE TRIMMETH — This word is an expression for cleansing the bowls of the candelabrum from the ashes of the wicks which had burnt out during the night; and he used to clean them (the lamps) out every morning.
הנרת THE LAMPS — luces in old French And this is the meaning of נרות whenever it is mentioned in connection with the candelabrum, except in any passage where the term העלאה “causing to ascend” (any verbal form which is the Hiphil of עלה), which denotes lighting is used, and there it signifies “lights”, (The translation here is therefore: “when he cleans out the lamps”, not “when he trims the lights”).

Verse 8

ובהעלת means when he kindles them by making their flame ascend (cf. Rashi on Exodus 27:20 and on Numbers 8:2).
יקטירנה HE SHALL BURN IT [A CONTINUAL INCENSE] — תמיד, “continual”, means every day regularly: a half he burnt in the morning and a half he burnt in the evening (Keritot 6b).

Verse 9

לא תעלו עליו YE SHALL NOT OFFER ON IT — on it, i. e. on this altar, but you may offer on the copper altar (cf. Menachot 50b),
קטרת זרה STRANGE INCENSE — any incense brought as a freewill offering; all of them (all offerings of incense) are “strange” to it (to the altar) except this prescribed here.
ועלה ומנחה means, nor burnt offering nor meal-offering. The עולה is an offering of an animal or bird; מנחה is one of bread.

Verse 10

וכפר אהרן AND AARON SHALL MAKE EXPIATION — This refers to the placing of the blood upon the horns of the altar.
אחת בשנה ONCE IN THE YEAR — On the Day of Atonement. This is what is said in the section אחרי מות, which describes the sacrificial service on that

day, (Leviticus 16:18) “And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the Lord and make an expiation upon it”.
חטאת הכפרים SIN-OFFERING OF EXPIATION — These are the bullock and goat of the Day of Atonement which atone for the uncleanness of the Sanctuary and its holy offerings (Shevuot 2b; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 16:11).
קדש קדשים [IT IS] MOST HOLY — the altar is sanctified for offering on it these things alone and not for any other sacrificial service.

Verse 11

Verse 12

כי תשא This has the meaning of obtaining: WHEN THOU TAKEST [THE SUM], (not of “lifting up” as in Genesis 40:13); as the Targum has it, תקבל. The sense is: when you wish to obtain the sum total of their number — to know how many they are — do not take their census by their polls but each of them shall give half a shekel, and you shall count these, and so ascertain their number.
ולא יהיה בהם נגף THAT THERE BE NO CALAMITY AMONG THEM — for numbers (i. e. things that have been numbered) are subject to the influence of the “evil eye”, and therefore if you count them by their polls pestilence may befall them, as we find happened, in the days of David (II Samuel 24:10 and 15).

Verse 13

זה יתנו THIS SHALL THEY GIVE — He (God) showed him (Moses) a kind of fiery coin the weight of which was half a shekel and said to him, “Like this shall they give” (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 9).
העבר על הפקדים [EVERY ONE] THAT PASSETH AMONG THEM THAT ARE MUSTERED — Scripture uses the expression כל העבר על הפקדים instead of merely saying כל הפקדים because it is the practice of those who count animate beings to make these pass before them one after the other, counting them as they pass. Similar are: (Leviticus 27:32) “whatever passeth (יעבר) under the rod”; (Jeremiah 33:13) “the flock shall pass again (תעברנה) under the hands of him that counteth them”.
מחצית השקל בשקל הקדש THE HALF OF A SHEKEL AFTER THE SHEKEL OF HOLINESS - i. e. after the weight of the shekel which I have appointed for you as the standard by which to weigh the shekels used for sacred purposes, as, for instance, those shekels mentioned in the section dealing with estimating things dedicated to the Sanctuary and with “fields of possession” so dedicated (Leviticus ch. 27).
עשרים גרה השקל A SHEKEL IS TWENTY GERAHS — Having stated that it must be a holy shekel it now tells you exactly how much it is.
גרה in Hebrew denotes what is called a מעה, a coin of small value, in Aramaic. And in this sense we find it in the book of Samuel (I Samuel 2:36) “[every one that is left] shall come and crouch to him for a piece of (אגורת) silver and a morsel of bread” which the Targum renders by למעה דכסף.
עשרים גרה השקל A SHEKEL IS TWENTY GERAHS — For a full shekel is four zuz and a zuz was originally five meahs (consequently a shekel was twenty meahs or gerahs); only that they increased it (the zuz) by one sixth and so raised its value to six meahs of silver. Now THE HALF OF THIS (the original) SHEKEL of which I have spoken to you SHALL THEY GIVE AS A HEAVE OFFERING TO THE LORD.

Verse 14

מבן עשרים שנה ומעלה FROM TWENTY YEARS OLD AND ABOVE — Scripture teaches you here that anyone less than twenty years of age does not go forth to the army nor is he to be counted among the "men" (of whom v. 12 speaks).

Verse 15

לכפר על נפשתיכם TO MAKE AN EXPIATION FOR YOUR SOULS — in order that you may not be liable to the plague in consequence of the census. Another explanation of לכפר על נפשתיכם is that it was really an atonement for their sins: because Scripture alludes here to three different heave offerings since it uses the expression תרומת ה׳ three times (twice in vv. 14 and 15, תרומת ה׳, and once in vers 13, תרומה לה׳). One mention is an allusion to the heave offering that was to be used for the making of the sockets, for he (Moses) counted them when they began to contribute towards the building of the Tabernacle, when each gave half a shekel, the total amounting to a hundred talents, as it is said, (Exodus 38:25) "and the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation was an hundred talents", and of these the sockets were made, as it is stated, (Exodus 38:27) "And of the hundred talents of silver [were cast the sockets of the Sanctuary etc.]". The second heave offering was also levied by way of census, for he numbered them again after the Tabernacle was erected; that is the census referred to in the beginning of the Book of Numbers: (Numbers 1:1) "[And the Lord spake unto Moses] … on the first day of the second month in the second year … [Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel]", and on that occasion, too, each of them gave half a shekel. These were employed in purchasing the communal sacrifices for each year. Rich and poor were made alike in regard to these half shekels; and it is with reference to this heave offering that Scripture uses here the expression לכפר על נפשתיכם, "to make expiation for your souls", for sacrifices were brought in order to make atonement. The third heave offering was that offered for the building of the Tabernacle, as it is said, (Exodus 35:24) "Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass…". In this heave offering, however, they did not all participate alike, but each one brought whatever his heart prompted him to give (Talmud Yerushalmi Shekalim 1:1; cf. Rashi on Exodus 25:1).

Verse 16

ונתת אתו על עבדת אהל מועד AND THOU SHALT GIVE IT FOR THE SERVICE OF THE APPOINTED TENT — From this statement you may learn that he (Moses) was commanded to take their census when they began to contribute towards the building of the Tabernacle, after the incident of the golden calf, because the pestilence had befallen them, as it is said, (Exodus 32:35) "and the Lord plagued the people". A parable: To what may this be compared? To a flock that is dear to its owner upon which there fell pestilence. As soon as it ceased he said to the shepherd, "I beg of you, count my sheep and ascertain how many of them are left". He did this to show that it (the flock) was dear to him (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 9). — It is, however, impossible to say that the census mentioned here is identical with that spoken of in the Book of Numbers (1:1), for there (in Numbers 1:1) Scripture states, "[And God spake to Moses …] on the first day of the second month … [Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel etc.]", whilst the Tabernacle was set up on the first day of the first month as it is said, (Exodus 40:2) "On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up [the Tabernacle etc.]", and from this census (that mentioned in this paragraph) — from the shekels obtained by it — the sockets used for its boards were made, for it is said, (Exodus 38:27) and of the hundred talents of silver were cast [the sockets of the sanctuary]". Consequently you learn from this that two censuses were

taken, viz., one at the beginning of their contributing towards the Tabernacle, after the Day of Atonement (when Moses first commanded the people to engage in the construction of the Tabernacle; see Rashi on Exodus 33:11, last sentence), in the first year, and the other in the second year, in Iyar, after the Tabernacle had already been set up. If you ask, however: is it at all possible that on both of these occasions the number of the Israelites was exactly the same, viz., 603,550, for in the account of how the silver of those that were numbered of the congregation was used (Exodus 38:27) it is so stated, and in the Book of Numbers (1:46) exactly the same is stated, "Even all they that were numbered were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty"; were not these censuses taken in two different years, and surely it is impossible that there were not at the time of the first census people nineteen years old who accordingly were not counted and who became twenty years old in the second year when the second census was taken and this must have added to the total?! The reply to this question is: As far as the years of men's ages are concerned they were counted in the same year, but reckoning from the time of the exodus from Egypt they were two different years in which the censuses were held. For when we speak of a period beginning with the exodus from Egypt, which took place in Nisan, we calculate from Nisan, as we have learned in Treatise Rosh Hashanah 2b. Consequently the Tabernacle was being built in the first year and was erected in the second year, because a new year began on the first of Nisan following the exodus. The years of people's ages, however, were counted according to the era of the creation of the world which begins with Tishri, consequently from this point of view both censuses took place in the same year: the first in Tishri after the Day of Atonement when the Omnipresent became reconciled with Israel to grant them His pardon and when they received the command regarding the construction of the Tabernacle, and the second on the first of Iyar, so that those who were only 19 years old after the Day of Atonement when the first census was taken, were not yet regarded as twenty in Iyar when the second census was held even though they were born between Tishri and Iyar.
על עבדת אהל מועד FOR THE SERVICE OF THE APPOINTED TENT — i. e. for the sockets that were made of it (the expiation money).

Verse 17

Verse 18

כיור A LAVER — like a large pot with teats which discharged water by the way of their openings.
וכנו — Understand this as the Targum renders it: בסיסה ITS BASE, i. e. a stand specially made for the laver.
לרחצה TO LAVE WITHAL — This, of course, refers to the laver and not to the base.
ובין המזבח BETWEEN [THE APPOINTED TENT AND] THE ALTAR — the altar of burnt offering of which it is written, (Exodus 40:6) that is was to be set "before the entrance of the dwelling of the appointed tent". The laver was drawn a little to the side and stood facing the open space which was between the altar and the Tabernacle, and it did not stand between them at all because it is stated (Exodus 40:29) "and he put the altar of burnt offering by the entrance of the dwelling of the appointed tent" which implies that the altar was in front of the entrance of the appointed tent, but that the laver was not in front of the entrance of the appointed tent. How was it arranged? It was drawn a little towards the south. Thus is it stated in Treatise Zevachim 59a.

Verse 19

את ידיהם ואת רגליהם THEIR HANDS AND THEIR FEET The priest washed his hands and his feet simultaneously. Thus we learn in Zevachim 19b: How was the procedure in washing hands and feet? He placed his right hand upon his right foot (knee) and his left hand upon his left foot (knee) and thus washed both simultaneously.

Verse 20

בבאם אל אהל מועד WHEN THEY COME INTO THE APPOINTED TENT to burn incense in the morning and at evening, or to sprinkle of the blood of the bullock offered by the anointed High-Priest (Leviticus 4:5, 7) and of the he-goats offered as atonement for the sin of idolatry (all of which services were performed in the interior of the Sanctuary) (Zevachim 19b).
ולא ימתו THAT THEY DIE NOT — thus it follows that if they do not wash they will die: You may rightly draw this conclusion for in the Torah laws are sometimes stated only by implication: consequently from what is said here in the negative (that they die not) you may derive the positive (that they will die if they do not observe the law here laid down).
אל המזבח [OR WHEN THEY STEP] NEAR THE ALTAR — i. e. the outer altar, in which case there is no entering into the appointed tent but the service is performed in the court.

Verse 21

ולא ימתו THAT THEY DIE NOT — This statement is intended to declare subject to the death penalty anyone who ministers at the outer altar without having washed his hands and his feet, because from the first mention of "death" (v. 20) we can only infer that one is subject to death for entering the Sanctuary under these circumstances.

Verse 22

Verse 23

בשמים ראש PRINCIPAL SPICES — i. e. excellent ones.
וקנמן בשם AND OF CINNAMON SPICE — Because cinnamon is the bark of a tree there is some of good quality, having fragrance and a pleasant taste and there is some which is merely like wood; Scripture therefore felt itself compelled to state, "Cinnamon בשם — with sweet scent": of the good species.
מחציתו חמשים ומאתים [AND OF CINNAMON SPICE] HALF SO MUCH, EVEN TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY [SHEKELS] — The half of what is to be brought shall be 250 shekels; consequently the whole weight of this species was 500 shekels exactly the same as that of the myrrh. But if this be so, why is it (the quantity to be brought) expressed in halves? It is the ordinance of Scripture that it should be brought in halves only, so that the quantity may be increased by two overweights, for there was no exact balancing of the scales in weighing the spices, but a little was always added. Thus it is stated in Keritot 5a.
וקנה בשם AND CALAMUS SPICE — i. e. cane of sweet spices. Because there are canes which do not bear sweet spices Scripture had to state (add the word) בשֹׂם
חמשים ומאתים TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY was the amount of its entire weight (not of the half of it as in the case of the preceding ingredient).

Verse 24

וקדה AND OF CASSIA [FIVE HUNDRED SHEKEL] — קדה is the name of a root of a certain herb. In the language of our Sages it is called קציעה (cf. Onkelos).
הין ONE HIN — twelve logs. The Sages in Israel are of different opinions as to the purpose of the oil. R. Meir said: in it the roots were boiled. Whereupon R. Jehuda said to him: Surely it (the quantity of oil) was not sufficient even to smear the roots with it, but they were steeped in water so that, being saturated with it, they should not absorb the oil; the oil was then poured upon them and they were left thus until it (the oil) absorbed their scent and then they skimmed the oil off the roots (Horayot 11b; Keritot 5a).

Verse 25

רקח מרקחת A COMPOUND COMPOUNDED — רקח is a noun and its accent proves it, for it is on the first syllable, on the ר, so that it is a noun just as are רֶקַח in (Song 8:2) "I would cause thee to drink of the mixed wine (מיין הרקח)" and רֶגַע in (Exodus 33:5) "one moment (רֶגַע אחד)", and it is not a participle like (Isaiah 51:15) "[I am the Lord] who stireth up (רוֹגַע) the sea", or (Isaiah 42:5) "Who spreadeth forth (רֹקַע) the earth", where the accent is on the last syllable. Any thing (ingredient) which is mixed with another so thoroughly that one becomes impregnated with the other as regards the smell or the taste is called a מרקחת.
Thus רקח מרקחת (lit., a mixing of a mixture) means a compounding effected by skilled art and perfect mixing.
מעשה רקח THE WORK OF A COMPOUNDER — רֹקֵחַ is the name given to a workman skilled in this matter.

Verse 26

ומשחת בו AND THOU SHALT ANOINT WITH IT — All anointings mentioned in Scriptures were made in the form of a Greek X except the anointing of kings which were made round the head like a crown (wreath) (Keritot 5b).

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

וקדשת אתם AND THOU SHALT SANCTIFY THEM — This anointing (mentioned v. 26) sanctifies them so that they become most holy. And in what consists their holiness? כל הנגע בהם וגו׳ that WHOSOEVER TOUCHETH THEM [SHALL BECOME HOLY]. — Whatever is proper for use in a particular sacred vessel becomes itself holy (more lit., becomes holy with bodily holiness) as soon as it comes into it, so that it becomes invalid as an offering under the following conditions: when after it had been placed in the vessel it had been taken (lit., had gone forth) outside the fore-court, or when it had been left the whole of the night without being placed on the altar, or when it has come into contact with a טבול יום (a person who had been unclean and has taken the ritual immersion but is awaiting sunset to be regarded as clean, as is prescribed in Leviticus 22:7). Moreover it cannot be redeemed by payment of its value to the Temple treasury, thereby to reassume its ordinary character. But whatever is not proper to

them (to these vessels) they do not make holy (Zevachim 87a). A similar statement is made in an uncontroverted (Hebrew: perfect) Boraitha (Zevachim 83b) about the hallowing power of the altar: Since it is said, (Exodus 29:37) "Whatsoever toucheth the altar shall become holy", I might infer that this applies to a thing whether it was fitting to be an offering at the time when it was brought into the Sanctuary or whether it was not fitting; Scripture therefore states immediately afterwards, (Exodus 29:38) "[Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar]; two lambs". Now how is it in the case of the lambs? They are fitting for the altar! So, also, does the preceding statement, "Whatsoever [touches the altar shall become holy]", refer only to anything that is fitting (i. e. that was already fitting to be brought upon the altar and became disqualified only after it had been brought into the forecourt of the Sanctuary). — In all cases where the term משח, "to anoint", is used with reference to the Tabernacle or priests or kings it is rendered by the Targum by the appropriate form of the verb רבה, "to raise to high rank", "to distinguish", because the anointing of them had no other purpose than to show the distinction that was being bestowed upon them. For thus did the Heavenly King ordain (Rashi uses here the words of the text, (Esther 1:9) that this should constitute their installation in their high office. In any other case, however, where משח is used, — for instance, (Exodus 29:2) "wafers [unleavened] משוחים with oil"; (Amos 6:6) "and with the chief ointments ימשחו" — the Aramaic expression for them in the Targum is the same term as the Hebrew text, viz., a form of משח; (because in these passages anointing is an end in itself, whilst in the former case it is an indication only of elevation to a distinguished position).

Verse 30

Verse 31

לדרתיכם THROUGHOUT YOUR GENERATIONS — From here our Rabbis derived that it (the oil of anointment) was miraculously preserved in its entirety for the time to come (for the Messianic days) (Horayot 11b).
זה has the numerical value of 12, alluding to the 12 "logs" which was the measure for the oil of anointment (Horayot 11b; cf. Rashi v. 24).

Verse 32

לא יסך with two "yods" has the meaning "he shall not do something" (i. e. it is 3rd person masc. sing. Kal), similar to יטב in (Deuteronomy 6:18) "that it may be well (יטב) with thee".
על בשר אדם לא יסך UPON MAN'S FLESH SHALL IT NOT BE POURED — anything from that selfsame oil (which Moses had prepared).
ובמתכנתו לא תעשו כמהו AND ACCORDING TO ITS PROPORTION YE SHALL NOT MAKE ANY LIKE IT — In regard to the quantities of its spices ye shall not make any other oil like it — i. e. in regard to the weights of these spices in proportion to the measure of a hin of oil; but if one uses less or more of these spices in proportion to the measure of a hin of oil, it is permitted to do so. And even if it is made in the same proportions as this (the oil made by Moses) it is not the one who anoints himself with it that is punishable (for this applies only to one who anoints himself with the oil made by Moses) but he who compounds it (Keritot 5a).
ובמתכנתו is a term denoting amount, as (Exodus 5:8) "the quantity (מתכנת) of bricks". Similar is the word מתכנת used of the incense (v. 37).

Verse 33

ואשר יתן ממנו WHOSOEVER PUTTETH ANY OF IT — of that made by Moses (Keritot 5a)
על זר UPON A STRANGER — when it is not required for installing a person into the high-priesthood or kingdom (Keritot 5b).

Verse 34

נטף is balsam. Because it is merely the sap which drips from the wood of the balsam tree it is called נטף, "dripping" (Keritot 6a). In old French it is called gomme; English gum. The balm itself, however, is called thériaque (cf., however, Ramban).
ושחלת AND ONYCHA This is a root of a fragrant herb, smooth and transparent like a fingernail, In the language of the Mishna it is called צפורן, a nail (cf. Keritot 6a). This is exactly how Onkelos renders it: וטופרא, which is the Aramaic word corresponding to the Hebrew צפורן.
וחלבנה — This is a malodorous spice which is called galbanum. Scripture enumerates it among the spices of the incense to teach us that we should not regard as a light thing the duty of associating with ourselves when we band together for fasts and prayers Israelites who are transgressors — that they should be counted as ourselves (Keritot 6b).
סמים means other SPICES also.
ולבנה זכה AND PURE FRANKINCENSE — From here our Rabbis learned that eleven spices were mentioned to Moses on Sinai (a technical term, like הלכה למשה מסיני) as the ingredients of the incense. For the least number implied by the plural סמים is two; balsam, onycha and galbanum are three, making together five. The word סמים that follows (without stating any number) is intended to add a similar number as these already prescribed, viz., five, making ten, and frankincense makes eleven. They are the following: balm, onycha, galbanum, frankincense, myrrh, cassia, spikenard and saffron, altogether eight — for שבלת and נרד are one, it being given this compound name only because the nard resembles a שבלת, a spike, — costus, aromatic bark and cinnamon, altogether eleven. "Borith karshina" (lye obtained from a species of vetch) which is also mentioned in Keritotot 6a in connection with the ingredients of the incense was not burnt itself as incense, but the onycha was rubbed with it in order to whiten it — that it should be (look) better (Keritot 6a).
בד בבד יהיה means, these four ingredients mentioned here shall be equal, weight for weight — as the weight of one so shall be the weight of another. Thus indeed we learn (Keritot 6a): the balm, the onycha, the galbanum and the frankincense shall each have the weight of seventy manehs. The term בד seems to me to mean "a single article" (cf. לְבַד ,בָּדָד) - they shall be "one equal with one": they shall be the one the same as the other.

Verse 35

ממלח TEMPERED TOGETHER — Understand this as the Targum renders it: מעורב, mixed — that they should thoroughly intermix the powder of the ingredients. I think that similar in meaning to it are the nouns in (Jona 1:5) "Then the mariners (המלחים) were afraid"; (Ezekiel 27:27) "thy mariners (מלחיך) and thy pilots", who are so called because they turn over (stir up) the water with oars when they propel the ship — like a person who stirs up beaten eggs with a spoon in order to mix them with water. Anything that a person wishes to mix up thoroughly he stirs up with his finger or with a spoon.
ממלח טהור קדש TEMPERED TOGETHER, PURE AND HOLY — i. e. tempered together shall it (the compound) be, pure shall it be, and holy shall it be.

Verse 36

ונתת ממנה וגו׳ AND THOU SHALT PUT OF IT [BEFORE THE TESTIMONY IN THE APPOINTED TENT] — This refers to the incense which was burnt daily on the inner altar that was in the tent of meeting.
אשר אועד לך שמה WHERE I WILL BE MET BY THEE — All appointments for the purpose of speaking unto you which I shall make with you I shall confine to that place (cf. Rashi on Exodus 25:22).

Verse 37

במתכנתה means, according to the quantity of spices used by Moses.
קדש תהיה לך לה׳ IT SHALL BE UNTO THEE HOLINESS FOR THE LORD — This means that you must not make it except in honour of My Name.

Verse 38

להריח בה [WHOSOEVER SHALL MAKE LIKE UNTO THAT] TO SMELL THERETO [SHALL BE CUT OFF] — but you may make some according to these quantities of your own spices for the purpose of selling it to the community (cf. Keritot 5a).

Chapter 31

Verse 1

Verse 2

קראתי בשם I HAVE CALLED BY NAME — to accomplish My work — BEZALEL.

Verse 3

חכמה WISDOM is what a person hears from others and learns (makes his own).
תבונה UNDERSTANDING is understanding a matter by one’s own intelligence deducing it from the things one has already learned.
דעת means holy inspiration.

Verse 4

לחשב מחשבה lit., TO DEVISE DEVICES — this refers to the weaving of an artist’s work.

Verse 5

ובחרשת denotes artisanship generally, as (Isaiah 40:20) “a clever artisan (חרש חכם)”. Onkelos, however, more closely defines the term each time it occurs in this verse and varies the definition he gives of them: the first he renders by אמנות and the second by נגרות, because the lapidary is called in Aramaic אמן, whilst the worker in wood is called נגר, and he therefore uses the abstract forms of these nouns to specify the particular kind of artisanship here intended.
למלאת TO SET IN — i. e. to put it into its setting, so as to fill it in (למלאת) by making the setting according to the size of the bottom of the stones and its thickness.

Verse 6

ובלב כל חכם לב וגו׳ AND IN THE HEARTS OF ALL THAT ARE WISE HEARTED [I HAVE GIVEN WISDOM] — and there are still other wise-hearted men among you (beside Bezalel and Oholiab) and all these in whom I have given wisdom shall make all that I have commanded thee.

Verse 7

ואת הארן לעדת AND THE ARK FOR THE TESTIMONY — for the purpose of the Tablets of the testimony (not, "the ark to serve as the testimony"; the ל denotes "for" in the sense of "for the use of", and the term עדת is an abbreviation of לחות העדות).

Verse 8

הטהרה THE (PURE [CANDELABRUM] — It is called טהרה because the term זהב טהר, pure gold, is used of it (cf. Exodus 25:31) (not טהרה in contrast to טמאה).

Verse 9

Verse 10

ואת בגדי השרד AND THE GARMENTS OF THE SERVICE — I think — according to the plain sense of the verse — that one cannot say that Scripture is here speaking of (referring to) the priestly garments, because to them refer the next words: "and the garments of holiness for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons to minister as priests". But these בגדי שרד are identical with the garments of blue purple wool, and red purple wool, and crimson wool which are mentioned in the chapter (Numbers IV.) giving an account of Israel's encampments: (Numbers 4:12) "and they shall put them in a garment of blue purple"; (Numbers 4:13) "and spread a garment of red purple thereon"; (Numbers 4:8) "and they shall spread upon them a garment of crimson". And indeed my opinion appears correct, because it is said, (Exodus 39:1) "And of the blue purple, and of the red purple, and of the crimson, they made garments of the service (בגדי שרד) to minister in the holiness", and linen is not mentioned among them (these materials). Now if Scripture were speaking of the priestly garments it could not have omitted "linen"", for we do not find in respect of even one of them (of the priestly garments) mention of red purple or crimson without linen. בגדי השרד GARMENTS OF SERVICE — Some explain שרד to mean work and service (cf. שרת to serve), as the Targum renders it: לבושי שמושא, "garments for the service". There is, however, no other example of it (of שרד) in Scriptures. I, however, think that it is an Aramaic expression, like the Targum of קלעים, hangings, which Onkelos renders by שרדין, and of מכבר, "grate", which he renders by שרדא, both words denoting net-work, and they are called "garments of שרד, net-work", because they were woven not in the ordinary way but with the needle (a kind of crochet-work), made with many holes; "lacies" in old French; English, net or mesh-work.

Verse 11

ואת קטרת הסמים לקדש AND INCENSE OF AROMATICS FOR THE SANCTUARY — i. e. for the purpose of letting it (the incense) rise in smoke in the היכל which is the "קדש" (that part of the Tabernacle or Temple in front of the קדש קדשים.

Verse 12

Verse 13

ואתה דבר אל בני ישראל SPEAK THOU ALSO UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL — AND thou, although I have given thee charge to command them concerning the work of the Tabernacle let it not appear a light thing to thee to set the Sabbath aside on account of that work.
אך את שבתתי תשמרו BUT NEVERTHELESS MY SABBATHS SHALL YE KEEP — Even though you be anxious and alert to do the work promptly the Sabbath nevertheless you must not set aside on its account. The words אך and רק wherever they occur in Scripture have limitative force (Rosh Hashanah 17b; cf. Rashi on Rosh Hashanah 17b on אכין ורקין). Here Scripture intends by the word אך to except the Sabbath from the days on which the work of the Tabernacle may be done.
כי אות היא ביני וביניכם FOR IT IS A SIGN BETWEEN ME AND YOU — There is a mark of distinction in the relation that exists between us, viz., the fact that I have chosen you by letting you inherit for rest that day on which "I" rested.
לדעת TO KNOW — (not, "for you to know", but) for the nations of the world to know through it, כי אני ה' מקדשכם THAT I AM THE LORD THAT DOTH SANCTIFY YOU.

Verse 14

מות יומת SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH by the judges if there are witnesses testifying to the desecration and if the warning required by law had been given to the culprit immediately before he committed the offence.
ונכרתה SHALL BE CUT OFF [FROM AMONG HIS PEOPLE] by God, if no such warning had been given (Mekhilta).
מחלליה means, whosoever treats it as חול, ordinary, in so far as its sanctity is concerned.

Verse 15

שבת שבתון denotes, reposeful rest and not rest of a casual character.
קדש לה' HOLINESS TO THE LORD — The observance of its holiness shall be (it shall be kept holy) to the glory of My Name and by My command (because I have commanded it).

Verse 16

Verse 17

וינפש AND WAS REFRESHED — Take it as the Targum renders it: ונח "and He rested". Every form of נפש is derived from the noun נֶפֶשׁ, soul; the idea is, that one calms his soul and takes breath when one reposes after the toil of labour. — And He of Whom it is written, (Isaiah 40:28) "[… the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth] fainteth not nor is He weary", and Whose every action is accomplished by His mere command had the term "repose" written of (ascribed to) Himself in order to make comprehensible to the human ear what it can understand.

Verse 18

ויתן אל משה וגו׳ AND HE GAVE UNTO MOSES etc. — There is no "earlier" or "later" (no chronological order) in the events related in the Torah: in

fact the incident of the golden calf (related in ch. 32) happened a considerable time before the command regarding the work of the Tabernacle was given (ch. 25 and the following chapters). For on the seventeenth of Tammuz were the Tablets broken (when the people were worshipping the calf) and on the Day of Atonement God became reconciled with Israel (after Moses had prayed 80 days for forgivenness; so that it is very unlikely that the command for the building of the Tabernacle should have been given before that day) and on the next day, the eleventh of Tishri (cf. Rashi on Exodus 33:11, at end of comment on ושב אל המחנה), they began to bring their contributions for the Tabernacle which was set up on the first of Nisan. (From the seventeenth of Tammuz until the eleventh of Tishri are almost three months — ימים רבים) (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 31).
ככלתו WHEN HE FINISHED [SPEAKING] — The word ככלתו is written defectively (without a ו after the ל) to intimate that the Torah was handed over to Moses as a gift (note the word ויתן), complete in every respect, even as the bride (the word ככלתו is taken to be connected with "כלה", bride) is handed over to the bridegroom completely equipped with all she requires — for in a period brief as this which Moses spent on the mountain, he must have been unable to learn in its entirety every law to be derived from it. Another explanation why the word is written defective is: just as a bride (כלה) bedecks herself with 24 ornaments — those which are mentioned in the book of Isaiah (ch. 3) — so a scholar (תלמיד חכם) ought to be thoroughly versed in the contents of the 24 books of Scripture (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 16).
לדבר אתו TO SPEAK WITH HIM the statutes and the judgments contained in the section beginning with ואלה המשפטים (ch. Exodus 21 ff.).
לדבר אתו TO SPEAK "WITH" HIM — The use of the word אתו "with him" teaches us that Moses first heard the laws from the mouth of the Almighty and that then they both again repeated each Halacha together (Exodus Rabbah 41:5).
לחת TABLETS — The word is written defectively לחת (without a ו between ת and ת), thus intimating that they were both alike in every respect (Exodus Rabbah 41:6).

Chapter 32

Verse 1

כי בשש משה [AND WHEN THE PEOPLE SAW] THAT MOSES DELAYED LONG — Understand בשש as the Targum does, as an expression denoting "lateness".. Similar are: (Judges 5:28) "[Why is] his chariot so long (בשש) [in coming]?"; (Judges 3:25) "And they waited until it was late (עד בוש)". For when Moses ascended the mountain he said to them (to the Israelites): at the end of a period of forty days (i. e. on the fortieth day) I shall return during the first six hours of the day (before noon). They thought that the day on which he ascended the mountain (the seventh of Sivan) was to be included in this number (thus — Sivan having 30 days — he was expected back before noon on the sixteenth of Tammuz). In fact, however, he had said to them "after forty days" meaning complete days — forty days, each day together with its night that precedes it — (as is the customary Jewish reckoning; cf. Genesis 1:5: ויהי ערב ויהי בקר). Now, as regards the day of this ascent, its night was not part of it that it can be reckoned as a complete day, for he ascended on the seventh of Sivan early in the morning (cf. Rashi on Exodus 19:3); it follows therefore that the fortieth day really fell on the seventeenth of Tammuz and not as the people had believed on the sixteenth. On the sixteenth of Tammuz Satan came and threw the world into confusion, giving it the appearance of

darkness, gloom and disorder that people should say: "Surely Moses is dead, and that is why confusion has come into the world!" He said to them, "Yes, Moses is dead, for six hours (noon) has already come (ששׁ = בא ששׁ) and he has not returned etc." — as is related in Treatise Shabbat 89a (cf. Rashi and Tosafot there and Tosafot on Bava Kamma 82a ד"ה כדי). One cannot, however, say that they erred only on account of it being a cloudy day, their mistake consisting in not being able to distinguish between forenoon and afternoon, and that thus they were correct in their supposition that he was to return on the sixteenth of Tammuz; for this assumes that he really returned on the day when they made the calf, but that they were under the impression that noon was past — for, as a matter of fact, Moses did not come down until the following day (the day after they had made the calf), for it is said (v. 6) "And they rose up early in the morrow, and brought up burnt offerings"— and only after wards the Lord said to Moses (v. 7) "Go, go down; for thy people … have corrupted themselves".
אשר ילכו לפנינו [MAKE US GODS] WHICH SHALL GO BEFORE US — They wished to have many gods (the words אלהים is to be taken as plural since the verb ילכו is plural; cf. Sanhedrin 63a).
כי זה משה האישׁ FOR AS FOR THIS MOSES — This Moses implies that Satan showed them something that looked like Moses being carried on a bier in the air high above in the skies (cf. Shabbat 89a).
אשר העלנו מארץ מצרים [THAT MAN] THAT BROUGHT US UP OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, and who used to show us the way we had to go; now that he is dead we need gods which shall go before us.

Verse 2

באזני נשׁיכם [BREAK OFF THE GOLDEN PENDANTS], WHICH ARE IN THE EARS OF YOUR WIVES — Aaron said to himself: women and children have a love for their ornaments; perhaps the matter will be delayed because they will hesitate to give their ornaments, and in the meantime Moses may arrive. They (the men), however, did not wait until the women and children made up their minds but they took the ornaments off themselves (cf. v. 3: they took off the pendants which were in their ears; there is no reference to the pendants belonging to the women) (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 21).
פרקו is an imperative plural derived from פרק which is used for the singular, just as בָּרְכִוּ is derived from בָּרֵךְ (פרקו and ברכו are both masculine imperative Piel).

Verse 3

ויתפרקו AND [ALL THE PEOPLE] BRAKE OFF — פרק is a term denoting "unloading a burden". Being a transitive verb one would expect ויפרקו instead of the reflexive form ויפרקו but when they took them (the pendants) off their ears they themselves became unloaded from their pendants and therefore ויתפרקו "they unloaded themselves", is the appropriate word to use; décharger in old French, English discharge.
את נזמי is the same as מנזמי, (they unloaded themselves from their pendants), (את having the same meaning as מן), similar to (Exodus 9:29) "As soon as I am gone out את העיר", which means מן העיר, from the city.

Verse 4

ויצר אתו בחרט — One can translate this in two ways. The one is: to take ויצר in the sense of "tying up" (Hiphil of צרר) and בחרט in the sense of "a garment", similar to (Isaiah 3:22) "and the mantles and the scarfs (והחריטים)"; (2 Kings 5:23) "and bound (ויצר) two talents of silver in two cloths (חריטים)". The other way is: to take ויצר in the sense of "forming figures" (Hiphil of צור) and חרם as denoting goldsmiths' tool

with which they engrave and cut figures into gold, like a writer's stylus that incises letters on boards and tablets, as we find it in, (Isaiah 8:1) ''[Take a great roll] and write on it with a man's pen (חרט)". This (the second explanation) is what Onkelos means when he renders the passage by וצר יתיה בזיפא and he formed it with a "זיפא", a term which is connected with the word זיוף "forgery". It is a tool with which letters and modelled figures are engraved in gold — a kind of work which they term niel in old French (cf. Rashi and our Note on Exodus 25:33), and by means of which seals are forged (מזיפין).
עגל מסכה A MOLTEN CALF — As soon as he (Aaron) had thrown it (the gold) into the fire in a melting pot the magicians amongst the mixed multitude who had come up with them from Egypt came and made it (the golden calf) by their magic art. There are some who say that Micah the idolator mentioned in Judges ch. 17, was there, who had been drawn forth from the foundations of a building in Egypt where he was nearly crushed. He had in his possession a "supernatural name" (שם) and a plate upon which Moses had written: "Come up, ox, come up, ox!" in order to raise the coffin of Joseph who is compared to an ox (cf. Deuteronomy 33:17) out of the Nile, and he cast it (the plate) into the melting pot and the calf (the young ox) came out (ויצא העגל הזה) (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 19).
מסכה MOLTEN is a term connected with מתכת, molten metal (ס and ת being interchanged in these words). Another explanation is: there were used in it (for making the golden calf) 125 talents of gold, corresponding to the numerical value of מסכה, which is 125 (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 19).
אלה אלהיך THESE ARE THY GODS, [O ISRAEL] — It does not state that they said "these are our gods, [O Israel]"; hence we may learn that it was the mixed multitude which came up from Egypt that gathered themselves together against Aaron, and it was they who made it and afterwards led Israel astray after it (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 19).

Verse 5

וירא אהרן AND WHEN AARON SAW that there was the breath of life in it — as it is said with reference to the golden calf, (Psalms 106:20) "[They changed their glory] into a similitude of an ox that ate grass" — and he realized that Satan's work had succeeded and that he had no argument (lit., mouth) to put them (the people) entirely off.
ויבן מזבח HE BUILDED AN ALTAR to put them off.
ויקרא חג לה׳ מחר AND CALLED OUT … TO-MORROW IS A FESTIVAL TO THE LORD — to-morrow, not to-day, for he hoped that Moses might return before they would worship it (the calf). This is the plain meaning of the verse. The Midrashic explanation of it in Leviticus Rabbah 10:3 (— it supplies an object to the verb וירא —) is: Aaron saw many things; he saw Hur, his sister's son, who had reprimanded them, and whom they had killed. This is the meaning of ויבן מזבח, viz., וַיָּבֶן, he realized (taking the word as from the root בון, to understand, to realize) מִזָּבוּחַ לפניו from him who lay slaughtered before him (מזבח is vowelled to be read as מְזָבוּחַ) what would happen to him if he offered resistance. A further explanation of וירא אהרן in the Midrash is: He saw what the situation was and said: It is better that the offence should attach itself to me than to them. And yet a further Midrashic explanation of וירא is: He looked into the matter and said: If they build this altar themselves, one will bring a clod and another a stone and the result will be that their work will be accomplished all at once; through myself building it and being dilatory in my work, in the meantime Moses may come.
חג לה׳ A FESTIVAL TO THE LORD — not to the golden calf. In his heart it (the feast) was for Heaven (the Lord). He felt confident that Moses would return by the morrow and that they would worship the Omnipresent (Leviticus Rabbah 10:3).

Verse 6

וישכימו AND THEY ROSE UP EARLY [IN THE MORNING] — Satan made them zealous in order that they might sin, for later on in the forenoon Moses actually came down from the mountain.
לצחק TO PLAY — There is implied in this term besides idolatry also sexual immorality, — as we find the word used in, (Genesis 39:17) "to mock (לצחק) me" where unchastity is meant as is evident from the context — and blood-shed, as it is said, (II Samuel 2:14) "Let the young men arise and play (וישחקו) before me; [and they caught every one his fellow by the head and thrust his sword in his fellows side]"— here, too, Hur was assassinated (Midrash Tanchuma 3:9:20).

Verse 7

וידבר AND [THE LORD] SAID — This term דבר when not followed by a word of the root אמר implies censorious speech, as (Genesis 42:7) "And he spake (וידבר) roughly (קשות) unto them".
לך רד GO, GO DOWN from your high position; I have given you distinction only for their sake! (Berakhot 32a). At that moment Moses was excommunicated by a decree of the heavenly court (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 22).
שחת עמך THY PEOPLE HAVE CORRUPTED THEMSELVES — It does not say the people have corrupted but "thy" people — the mixed multitude whom you received of your own accord and accepted as proselytes without consulting Me. You thought it a good thing that proselytes should be attached to the Shechina — now they have corrupted themselves and have corrupted others (Exodus Rabbah 42:6).

Verse 8

Verse 9

קשה ערף STIFF-NECKED — They turn their stiffened necks towards those who reprove them (i e. they turn their back upon them) and refuse to listen.

Verse 10

הניחה לי LET ME ALONE — So far we have not heard that Moses had prayed on their behalf and yet He says "let Me alone!" which implies a refusal to his entreaty! But by saying this He opened the door to him (offered him a suggestion) intimating to him that if he prayed for them He would not destroy them (Shemot Rabbah 42:9; cf. also Berakhot 32a).

Verse 11

למה ה' יחרה אפך WHEREFORE, O LORD, DOTH THY WRATH GLOW [AGAINST THY PEOPLE] — Does anyone become jealous of another, except a wise man of a wise man or a hero of a hero?! (Avodah Zarah 55a)

Verse 12

והנחם AND REPENT — form another resolution, viz., to do them good,
על הרעה INSTEAD OF THE EVIL You have thought to bring upon them.

Verse 13

זכור לאברהם (lit., remember for Abraham) — If they have transgressed the Ten Commandments, their father Abraham was tried by ten trials and has not yet received his reward for them. Give it to him now — remember for him this merit — and let the ten trials he successfully withstood countervail the infringement of the Ten Commandments (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 24; Shemot Rabbah 44:4).
לאברהם ליצחק ולישראל REMEMBER FOR ABRAHAM, FOR ISAAC, AND FOR ISRAEL — If they are to be punished with death by burning, remember for Abraham his merit that he gave himself over to be burnt for Your sake (for the sanctification of the Divine Name) in Ur (in the fire) of the Chaldees; if with death by the sword, remember for Isaac the merit that he stretched forth his neck to the knife on the occasion of the "Binding". If by exile, remember for Jacob the merit that he went into exile to Haran (leaving the paternal roof in order to fulfil his father's command). If, however, they cannot be saved by their ancestors merit what is the good of You saying to me, "and I will make of thee a great nation"? — if a chair with three legs (the merits of the three patriarchs) cannot stand before You in the moment of Your wrath, how much the less a chair with only one leg (the merits of myself alone) (Berakhot 32a).
אשר נשבעת להם בך TO WHOM THOU SWAREST BY THINE OWN SELF — Thou didst not swear to them by a thing which is perishable — neither by the heavens nor by the earth, nor by the mountains, nor by the hills — but by Thy very Self, Who endurest forever and Whose oath endures for ever. For it is stated that God said to Abraham, (Genesis 22:16, 17) "By Myself have I sworn saith the Lord … [I will greatly multiply thy seed]"; to Isaac it was said, (Genesis 26:3, 4) "and I will perform the oath which I sware by Myself unto Abraham thy father … [and I will multiply thy seed]"; and to Jacob it was said, (Genesis 35:11) "I am God Almighty, be fruitful and multiply"; thus to him also God swore by Himself — by God Almighty (Shemot Rabbah 44:23).

Verse 14

Verse 15

משני עבריהם ON BOTH THEIR SIDES could the letters be read, and this constituted a miraculous piece of work (Shabbat 104a).

Verse 16

מעשה אלהים המה [THE TABLETS WERE] THE WORK OF GOD — This means what it literally implies: God Himself (Hebrew: in His glory) made them. Another explanation (taking מעשה in the sense of "occupation") is: Just as a man says to his fellow, "All that Mr. So-and-so occupies himself with is only with such-and-such a work", so is the delight of the Holy One, blessed be He, confined to the Torah alone (cf. Proverbs 8:31 the whole of which chapter is taken as a description of God's relation to the Torah) (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 16).
חרות — The expressions חרת (which occurs only here in Scriptures) and חרט have the same meaning, both of them signifying engraving; entailler in old French

Verse 17

ברעה means WHEN THEY WERE SHOUTING for they were shouting for joy and making merry.

Verse 18

אין קול ענות גבורה IT IS NOT THE VOICE OF THE CRY OF MASTERY —This sound does not seem to be the sound of the utterance of victors who cry, "Victory!" nor is it the sound of the defeated who cry, "Alas — let me flee!".
קול ענות means, the sound of blasphemy and cursing (Shemot Rabbah 41:1) which distress (עִנֶּה to vex, to grieve) the soul of him who hears them — even when they are only related to him.

Verse 19

וישלך מידו AND HE CAST [THE TABLETS] OUT OF HIS HAND — He said: "What is the law regarding the Paschal lamb which is only one of the commandments? The Torah states: (Exodus 12:43) "No stranger shall eat thereof"! (cf. Rashi on that verse: a stranger means one who has enstranged himself by his doings from his Father in heaven — an apostate). "But the whole Torah is here (written on the tablets) and all the Israelites are apostates, can I possibly give it (the Torah) to them?!" (Shabbat 87a).
תחת ההר BENEATH THE MOUNTAIN — i. e. at the foot of the mountain.

Verse 20

ויזר AND STREWED IT — The verb זרה denotes scattering about, similar to, (Job 18:15) "Brimstone shall be scattered (יזרה) upon his habitation"; (Proverbs 1:17) "Surely in vain the net is strewn (מזורה) [in the sight of any bird]" where this expression is used because people usually bestrew it (the net) with grain and pulse.
וישק את בני ישראל AND HE GAVE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL TO DRINK OF IT — He intended to put them to the test as faithless wives were tried (cf. Numbers 5:12—31) (Avodah Zarah 44a). Three different death-penalties were inflicted there: It there were witnesses to the act of idolatry and a legal warning had preceded the deed the offender was put to death by the sword (cf. vv. 27, 28) as was the regulation regarding the inhabitants of an apostate city (Deuteronomy 13:13—18) when there were many (as was the case here; a single idolator, however, was subject to the death by stoning; cf. Deuteronomy 17:2—5). If there were witnesses but there had been no caution, they were destroyed by the plague, as it is said, (v. 35) "And the Lord plagued the people". In cases where there were neither witnesses nor warning they were punished by dropsy — for the water which Moses gave them to drink put them to the test and if they were guilty their bellies swelled (cf. Yoma 66b).

Verse 21

מה עשה לך העם הזה WHAT DID THIS PEOPLE UNTO THEE How many pains must you have endured — it must be that they inflicted suffering on you, before you brought this sin upon them!

Verse 22

כי ברע הוא [THOU KNOWEST THE PEOPLE] THAT THEY ARE SET ON EVIL — They always go on the wrong way and with temptations, before the Omnipresent.

Verse 23

Verse 24

ואמר להם AND I SAID UNTO THEM one single thing, — simply, "Who has any gold?" — but they hastened and broke it off from themselves and gave it to me.
ואשלכהו באש AND I CAST IT INTO THE FIRE, and I did not know that this (i. e. this living) calf would come out, ויצא — BUT IT DID COME OUT.

Verse 25

פרע means UNCOVERED — its (the people's) shame and disgrace were revealed; the word has the same meaning as in (Numbers 5:18) "[and the priest shall uncover (ופרע) the woman's head".
לשמצה בקמיהם means, that this thing would become an ignominy for them in the mouth of all who will rise against them.

Verse 26

מי לה' אלי means, WHOEVER IS FOR THE LORD let him come TO ME.
כל בני לוי ALL THE SONS OF LEVI — All the sons — from this we may gather that all the tribe of Levi remained worthy men (consequently "slay every man his brother" in the next verse can refer only to one who was his brother from the same mother, as explained by Rashi there) (Yoma 66b).

Verse 27

כה אמר ה' וגו׳ THUS SAITH THE LORD etc. — Where did he say so? In the command, (Exodus 22:19) "He that sacrificeth unto any god shall utterly be destroyed". Thus is it stated in the Mechilta.
איש HIS BROTHER from the same mother, but from a different father, and who was therefore an ordinary Israelite and not a Levite (Yoma 66b).

Verse 28

Verse 29

מלאו ידכם CONSECRATE YOURSELVES — You who are killing them (your own relatives) will by this very act install yourselves as priests of the Omnipresent God,
כי איש FOR EVERY MAN among you will consecrate himself בבנו ובאחיו BY HIS SON AND HIS BROTHER (by their death at his hand).

Verse 30

אכפרה בעד חטאתכם [PERADVENTURE] I SHALL MAKE AN EXPIATION FOR YOUR SIN — i. e. I shall put an effacing and a wiping off and a covering in front of your sin, to serve as a barrier between you and your sin.

Verse 31

אלהי זהב GODS OF GOLD — Moses emphasized the word "gold" as some excuse for their sin: It is You who have caused them to do this, for You gave them gold in abundance and everything they wished; what else were they likely to do if not to sin? A parable: this may be compared to a king who provides his son with food and drink, attires him with beautiful garments and hangs a money-bag round his neck and then deliberately places him at the door of a house of ill-fame! What else is the son likely to do if not to sin!? (Berakhot 32a)

Verse 32

ועתה אם תשא חטאתם YET NOW, IF THOU WILT FORGIVE THEIR SIN — well and good: then I do not suggest to You, "Blot me out [of Thy book], ואם אין מחני BUT IF NOT, BLOT ME OUT." This is an elliptical sentence, the words "Well and good" being omitted; of such there are many in Scripture. מספרך OF THY BOOK — of the entire book of the Torah; that people should not say about me that I was not worthy enough to pray effectively for them.

Verse 33

Verse 34

אל אשר דברתי לך OF WHICH I HAVE SPOKEN UNTO THEE — Here we have an instance of לך connected with the verb דבר being used in place of אליך (i. e. where לך actually means speaking to, not as its usual meaning it, speaking "concerning" someone or "in the interest of" someone as often pointed out by Rashi; cf. e. g., Rashi's comment on Genesis 28:15). Similar is, (1 Kings 2:19) "to speak unto him (לדבר לו) for Adonijah" (cf. Rashi on that verse).
הנה מלאכי BEHOLD, MINE ANGEL [SHALL GO BEFORE THEE] — My messenger, not Myself.
וביום פקדי וגו׳ AND IN THE DAY WHEN I VISIT [I WILL VISIT THEIR SIN UPON THEM] — At present I listen to you and will refrain from consuming them all at once — but ever and ever throughout the ages, when I am visiting them for their sins I shall visit them at the same time for a little of this sin in addition to their other sins for which I am then punishing them. Indeed no punishment ever comes upon Israel in which there is not part payment for the sin of the golden calf (cf. Sanhedrin 102a).

Verse 35

ויגף ה' את העם AND THE LORD PLAGUED THE PEOPLE — This was death inflicted by the heavenly Judge on those to whose offence there had been witnesses but no legal caution (cf. Rashi on v. 20).

Chapter 33

Verse 1

לך עלה מזה GO, GO UP HENCE — The land of Israel is situated higher than all the other neighbouring lands, therefore it said "go up" (Zevachim 54b). Another explanation is: As a compensation for what He had said to him (Moses) in a time of anger, (Exodus 32:7) "Go, go down", He now said to him, at a time of good-will, "Go, go up".
אתה והעם THOU AND THE PEOPLE [WHICH THOU HAST BROUGHT UP] — Here — (in contrast to Exodus 32:7) it does not say "and thy people" (the mixed multitude which thou, of thine own accord, hast brought up from Egypt) (Midrash Tanchuma 3:9:26).

Verse 2

וגרשתי את הכנעני וגו׳ AND I WILL DRIVE OUT THE CANAANITE etc. — These are only six nations whilst in Deuteronomy 7:1 seven such are mentioned! But the Girgashites, the seventh, arose and emigrated of their own accord from before them (the Israelites) and therefore are not mentioned here

amongst those who were driven out (Jerusalem Talmud Shevi'it 6:2; Leviticus Rabbah 17:6).

Verse 3

ארץ זבת חלב ודבש UNTO A LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY do I bid you to bring them up.
כי לא אעלה בקרבך BECAUSE I WILL NOT GO UP AMONG THEE, therefore I say to thee, I will send an angel before thee.
כי עם קשה ערף אתה FOR THOU ART A STIFF-NECKED PEOPLE, and if My Shechina were in thy midst and thou rebelledst against Me, I might become exceedingly angry with thee and destroy thee on the way.
אכלך is an expression for ''destroying".

Verse 4

הדבר הרע THIS EVIL THING — that the Shechina would not dwell nor go with them.
איש עדיו [AND NO MAN PUT ON HIM] HIS ORNAMENT — the crowns which were given them on Horeb when they said: (Exodus 24:7) "we shall do and hearken" (Shabbat 88a).

Verse 5

רגע אחד אעלה בקרבך וכליתיך WERE I TO GO UP AMONG THEE ONE MOMENT, I SHOULD CONSUME THEE — If I were to go up amongst you and you rebelled against Me in your stiff-neckedness I would be angry with you but one moment — for this is the duration of His wrath (Berakhot 7a), as it is said, (Isaiah 26:20) "Hide thyself for a short moment, until the indignation be passed" — and I would consume you; therefore it is better for you that I should send an angel.
ועתה AND NOW — This punishment shall be inflicted upon you now, at once, viz., that you should put off your ornaments from you.
ואדעה מה אעשה לך AND I KNOW WHAT I SHALL DO UNTO THEE — In respect to the visitation for the remainder of the sin which still remains unpunished (cf. Rashi on Exodus 32:34) I know what is in My mind to do unto you.

Verse 6

את עדים מהר חורב means THEIR ORNAMENT which they possessed from (מִ, from — in consequence of what happened at) MOUNT HOREB.

Verse 7

ומשה AND MOSES, from the time of the sin and henceforth,
יקח את האהל USED TO TAKE THE TENT — יקח expresses an action continually going on — he used to take his tent and pitch it without the camp. He said, "One who has been placed under an interdict by the Master must be placed under an interdict by His disciple also" (Since God had stated that He would not dwell amongst the people, Moses, the disciple, also felt compelled to remove from their midst) (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 27).
הרחק DISTANT [FROM THE CAMP] — two thousand cubits, just as it is stated, (Joshua 3:4) Yet there shall be a space between you (the Israelites) and it (the Ark) about 2,000 cubits by measure" (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 27).
וקרא לו AND HE CALLED IT — This does not mean that he so named it once for all but that whenever he spoke of it he used to call it the tent of meeting, i. e. a meeting-place for those who sought instruction in the Torah.

כל מבקש ה׳ EVERY ONE WHO SOUGHT THE LORD — Hence (from the fact that anyone who visited Moses is described here as "one who seeks the Lord") we may learn that he who makes a call on (Hebrew: seeks) a scholar (זקן is a Rabbinical term for a wise man; cf. Kiddushin 32b: אין זקן אלא חכם) may be regarded as paying his respects to the Divine Presence (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 27).
יצא אל אהל מועד WENT OUT UNTO THE APPOINTED TENT — יֵצֵא (the imperfect) has here the meaning of יוֹצֵא (the participle: cf. Rashi on יקח וכו׳), i. e. he used to go out. Another explanation of והיה כל מבקש ה׳ is: The word כל, "every one", implies: even the ministering angels used to go out unto the appointed tent; whenever these enquired where was the place of the Divine Glory their fellow-angels used to answer them: See, He (God) is in the tent of Moses.

Verse 8

והיה — This expresses an action continually going on ("and it used to be"),
כצאת משה WHEN MOSES WENT OUT from the camp in order to go אל האהל INTO THE TENT, יקומו כל העם ALL THE PEOPLE ROSE UP — they used to stand up before him and did not sit down until he vanished from their sight (Hebrew: was hidden from them).
והביטו אחרי משה AND THEY LOOKED AFTER MOSES — Not sneeringly but out of admiration; they exclaimed: Happy is the human being (Hebrew: one born of woman) who is so sure that the Shechina will enter the door of his tent after him (cf. Kiddushin 33b; Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 27, Exodus Rabbah 51:6).
And they would gaze after Moshe — in an admiring way, [saying, in effect:] "Fortunate is one born of woman who is assured that the Shechinah will follow him into the entranceway of his tent."

Verse 9

ודבר עם משה — This means the same as ומדבר עם משה AND HE USED TO SPEAK WITH MOSES (The verb ודבר expresses the idea of an action always going on as Rashi has explained the preceding verbs). The Targum renders it by ומתמלל עם משה (Hithpeal) i. e. He used to speak to Himself with (in the presence of) Moses — which is an expression of respect used with reference to the Shechinah. A similar Hebrew expression is, (Numbers 7:89) "Then he heard the voice מְדַבֵּר to him" (= מתדבר, with assimilated ת), and it does not read there, מְדַבֵּר, "speaking to him". Where the reading is מְדַבֵּר its interpretation is: The voice was speaking by itself (i. e. it was not directed to any particular person) and the ordinary man naturally heard it (because he was there); but where the reading is מְדַבֵּר, it implies that the King was conversing with the ordinary man.

Verse 10

והשתחוו AND THEY PROSTRATED THEMSELVES to the Shechinah.

Verse 11

ודבר ה׳ אל משה פנים אל פנים AND THE LORD SPAKE UNTO MOSES FACE TO FACE — Here too (as in v. 9) in spite of the fact that the text states "face to face" the Targum is: ומתמלל עם משה.
ושב אל המחנה.(AND HE RETURNED INTO THE CAMP — After God had conversed with him, Moses used to return to the camp and teach the elders what he had learned. This Moses practised from the day of Atonement until the Tabernacle was set up, but no longer. For on the seventeenth of Tammuz the tablets were broken, on the eighteenth he burnt the calf and punished

the of fenders, on the nineteenth he ascended the mountain, as it is said (Exodus 32:30) "And it came to pass on the morrow (the day after he had punished the wrongdoers; cf. vv. 26—29), that Moses said unto the people", [Ye have sinned a great sin and now I will go up to the Lord]". There he spent forty days and sought mercy for the people, as it is said, (Deuteronomy 9:18) "And I threw myself down before the Lord [as at the first, forty days and forty nights]". These terminated on the last day of Ab (there were 11 days from the 19th to the 29th of Tammuz therefore 29 days in Ab complete the forty) and he then returned to the people. On the first day of the New Moon of Ellul it was said to him, (Exodus 34:2) "And be ready in the morning] and go up in the morning unto mount Sinai" — to receive the second tablets. He again spent there the forty days of which it is stated, (Deuteronomy 10:10) "[And I stayed in the mountain, according to the first, days, [forty days and forty nights]". The words כימים הראשונים, "like the first days", cannot refer to the number of days for this is stated immediately afterwards; they are to be joined with עמדתי — I stayed in the same state as on the first days: How were the first forty days passed? In God's good-will (because the Israelites had not yet sinned)! So, too, the last forty days were passed in God's good-will — from which you must admit that the intervening forty days were passed in God's anger. On the tenth of Tishri God became reconciled with Israel in joy and perfect affection and said to Moses: "I have forgiven!" and handed him over the second tablets, whereupon Moses went down and began to command them concerning the work of the Tabernacle (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 31; Seder Olam 6; Rashi on Exodus 18:13, Deuteronomy 9:18 and also Taanit 36b). They were occupied in its construction until the first of Nisan and from the time when it was set up God did not converse with him any more except from the tent of meeting.
ושב אל המחנה AND HE RETURNED TO THE CAMP — The translation in the Targum is: וְתָיִב למשריתא (a participle) "and he used to return to the camp", because (as explained above) it denotes continuous action. Similarly, he translates all the verbs occuring in this section by participles: וראה כל העם he renders by וחזן; ונצבו by וקימין; והביטו by ומסתכלין; והשתחוו by וסגדין. The Midrash explains ודבר ה' אל משה thus: And the Lord spake to Moses that he should return to the camp. He said to him: I am angry and you are angry; if this is to remain so, who will attract them to Me again? (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 27 and Berakhot 63b).

Verse 12

ראה אתה אמר אלי SEE. THOU SAYEST UNTO ME — Set Thy eyes and Thy heart to Thy own words (Think for a moment of what Thou, Thyself, hast told me) אתה אמר אלי וגו' ואתה לא הודעתני וגו' THOU SAYEST UNTO ME [BRING UP THIS PEOPLE] AND NEVERTHELESS THOU HAST NOT LET ME KNOW [WHOM THOU WILT SEND WITH ME] — for what You have said to me (Exodus 23:20) "And I will send an angel before thee" is not "letting me know", for I am not satisfied with it.
ואתה אמרת ידעתיך בשם YET THOU HAST SAID, I HAVE KNOWN THEE BY NAME — I have distinguished you from all other human beings by a characteristic (שם) which shows my importance in Thy eyes, for, see, Thou hast said to me, (Exodus 19:9) "Behold, I come unto thee in a thick cloud etc.… and also in thee they shall believe for ever".

Verse 13

ועתה וגו' NOW THEREFORE etc. — If it is true that I have found favour in Thy eyes, הודיעני נא את דרכך LET ME KNOW THY WAY — let me know what is the reward which Thou givest to those who find favour in Thine eyes.
ואדעך למען אמצא חן בעיניך means, that I may know by this (by Your letting me know Your way) the nature of the reward You bestow — what is this

"finding of grace" which You have granted to me (Hebrew: which I found in Your eyes). The explanation of למען אמצא חן accordingly is: that I may find out (אמצא) how great is the reward attendant on this "finding of grace".
וראה כי עמך הגוי הזה AND CONSIDER THAT THIS NATION IS THY PEOPLE so that You should not say, as You have said, (Exodus 32:10) "And I will make thee a great nation", whilst these (the whole people) You will abandon! Consider that they are Your nation from of old, and if You reject them, surely I cannot rely upon it that those who are born of me will endure — rather let me know through this people the reward that is to be paid me (by sparing them). Our Rabbis have given a Midrashic explanation of this in Treatise Berakhot 7a but I come (my purpose is) to explain the verses in a manner fitting to them and in their context.

Verse 14

ויאמר פני ילכו AND HE SAID, MY FACE SHALL GO WITH THEE Understand this as the Targum renders it: My Shechinah will go — I will no more send an angel with you, but I Myself will go. פנים here has the sense of "Self" as in (II Samuel 17:11) "and that thou go in the battle in thine own person (פניך)".

Verse 15

ויאמר אליו AND HE SAID UNTO HIM — This is what I desired: for if it is to be by an angel rather do not bring us up from here.

Verse 16

ובמה יודע אפוא FOR WHEREIN SHALL IT BE KNOWN HERE [THAT I AND THY PEOPLE HAVE FOUND FAVOUR IN THY EYES] — i. e. wherein shall the "finding of favour" be known, הלא בלכתך עמנו IF NOT BY YOUR GOING WITH US!? And yet another thing do I ask You: that You should not let Your Shechinah rest upon the other peoples of the world (Berakhot 7a).
ונפלינו אני ועמך SO SHALL WE BE DISTINGUISHED, I AND THY PEOPLE — through this very thing we shall become different from all the peoples. נפלינו is of the same root and meaning as in (Exodus 9:4) "And the Lord shall make a separation (והפלה) between the cattle of Israel etc."

Verse 17

גם את הדבר הזה THIS THING ALSO — that My Shechinah shall not rest henceforth upon the other nations of the world, אעשה I WILL DO. And thus He did, for the prophetical words of Balaam (the heathen prophet) were not uttered by reason of the Shechinah resting upon him, but, as Scripture describes it, (Numbers 24:4) "[he saw the vision of the Almighty] fallen, but with eyes uncovered" (i. e. whilst fallen into a sleep his mental eyes were open and he saw in a dream what the Almighty was to reveal unto him) in a state of mind similar to that described by Job (Job 4:12) "a word was by stealth conveyed (יגנב) to me" — they (the heathen prophets) used to hear God's message through a medium.

Verse 18

ויאמר הראני נא את כבדך AND HE SAID I BESEECH THEE, SHOW ME THY GLORY — Moses saw that the hour was propitious and that his petitions were being favourably received, he therefore made a further request — that God should let him behold a reflection of His Glory.

Verse 19

ויאמר אני אעביר וגו׳ AND HE SAID, I WILL MAKE ALL MY GOODNESS PASS [BEFORE YOU] — The time has arrived when you shall see of My Glory so much as I will allow you to see according as I wish, and therefore I find it necessary to teach you a set form of prayer. Just now when you felt the need to pray for mercy on Israel's behalf you besought Me to remember the merits of the patriarchs and you thought that if the merits of the patriarchs are exhausted there is no more hope — I will therefore cause all the attribute of My goodness to pass before you on the rock whilst you are placed in the cave.
וקראתי בשם ה׳ לפניך AND I WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD BEFORE THEE, to teach you the formula when praying for mercy even though the merits of the patriarchs should be exhausted. And according to the manner in which you see Me doing this, cloaked — as it were — in the Talith and proclaiming the thirteen attributes of mercy, do you teach Israel to do. And because that they will make mention before Me of the attributes: "Merciful", "Gracious!" thereby proclaiming that My mercies do not fail (even though the merits of the patriarchs are exhausted) (Rosh Hashanah 17b).
וחנתי את אשר אחון I WILL BE GRACIOUS TO WHOM I WILL BE GRACIOUS i. e. in times when I shall be disposed to be gracious,
ורחמתי AND I WILL SHEW MERCY — those times that I shall desire to show mercy (Midrash Tanchuma 3:9:27). For the time being He only gave him (Moses) the promise: At times I will answer your prayer, at times I will not answer it. But at the time this was carried out (i. e. when He proclaimed the Attributes) He said to him (Exodus 34:10) "Behold, I make a covenant…" (I make this irrevocable) — thus assuring him that they (the 13 Attributes of Mercy when invoked in time of need) will never prove ineffective (Rosh Hashanah 17b).

Verse 20

ויאמר לא תוכל וגו׳ AND HE SAID, THOU CANST NOT [SEE MY FACE] — and even when I make all My goodness pass before you I shall not allow you to see My face.

Verse 21

הנה מקום אתי BEHOLD, THERE IS A PLACE BY ME — On the mountain where I am continually speaking with you there is a place prepared by Me for your sake where I will hide you that you may not be hurt by the vision. From there you will see what you will be permitted to see. A Midrashic explanation is that by the word מקום Scripture is speaking of the place where the Shechinah is and that He therefore said, "The place is by Me" and He did not say, "I am in the place", because the Holy One, blessed be He, is the "place" of the Universe (comprises the Universe) but His Universe is not His place (does not encompass Him) (Genesis Rabbah 68:9).

Verse 22

בעבר כבדי WHEN MY GLORY PASSETH BY - i. e. when I shall pass before you.
בנקרת הצור IN A CLEFT OF THE CRAG — נקרה is similar in meaning to the verbs in (Numbers 16:14) "Wilt thou bore out (תנקר) the eyes of these men?"; (Proverbs 30:17) "The ravens of the valley shall pick it out (יקרהו)"; (2 Kings 19:24) "I have digged a well (קרתי) and drunk strange waters". All these have the same derivation. נקרת הצור thus means a place dug out of the rock.
ושכתי כפי AND I WILL SHELTER [THEE] WITH MY HAND — Hence it is evident that permission has been given to the destructive agencies to wound. The Targum renders ושכתי כפי by ואגין במימרי "I will protect thee with My

word” This is merely a circumlocution in a manner more respectful to the Most High God and the Targum did not translate it literally because He (God) does not need to cover a person with the hand actually in order to protect him.

Verse 23

והסרתי את כפי AND I WILL REMOVE MY HAND — The Targum renders this by ואעדי ית דברת יקרי “I will remove the guidance of My Glory”; it means: when I shall remove the guidance of My Glory from before thine eyes — to go right away from that place,
וראית את אחרי THEN THOU SHALT SEE WHAT IS BEHIND ME — He showed him the Tephillin-knot which is placed behind the head (cf. Berakhot 7a; Menachot 35b).

Chapter 34

Verse 1

פסל לך HEW THEE — He showed him a quarry of sapphire in his tent and said to him: The chips (פסלת = פסל) shall be thine (לך). It was from this that Moses became so rich (cf. Midrash Tanchuma 3:9:29; Leviticus Rabbah 32:2).
Another explanation of פסל לך is: פסל לך HEW THYSELF — thou hast broken the first tablets, do thou therefore hew others. A parable: this may be compared to a king who travelled to a remote country (more lit., to a province over-sea) leaving his betrothed at home with her handmaids. Through the immoral conduct of her handmaids she also gained a bad reputation (more lit., there went forth against her an evil name). Her bridesman arose and tore up the marriage-contract saying: If the king proposes to kill her I shall say to him, “She is not yet thy wife” (the marriage contract which might have served as evidence being destroyed. The king made enquiry, found that the immorality had been only on the hand maids’ side and became reconciled with her. Her bridesman then said to the king, “Write another marriage contract for her because the first has been torn up”. Whereupon the king replied: You tore it up; do you therefore purchase for her new paper and I will write it for her in My handwriting. So, here, too: the King is the Holy One blessed be He, the handmaids are the mixed multitude, the bride’s friend is Moses, and the betrothed of the Holy One, blessed be He, is Israel — therefore it is said פסל לך, “Hew thyself the new tablets” (Midrash Tanchuma 3:9:30).

Verse 2

נכון means PREPARED.

Verse 3

ואיש לא יעלה עמך AND NO MAN SHALL GO UP WITH THEE — Because the first tablets were given amidst great noises and alarms and a vast assembly the “evil eye” had power over them (they did not endure) — there is no finer quality than to be unostentatious! (Midrash Tanchuma 3:9:31).

Verse 4

Verse 5

ויקרא בשם ה׳ AND HE CALLED BY NAME, O LORD — We render this in the Targum by, ויקרא בשמא דה' and he (Moses) called on the name of the Lord.

Verse 6

ה׳ ה׳ THE LORD, THE LORD — This is the attribute of Divine mercy. The one (the first ה׳) alludes to God having mercy on the sinner before he sins and the other after he has sinned and repented (Rosh Hashanah 17b).
אל GOD — This is also an attribute of Divine mercy (it is not, as אלהים, an attribute of stern justice). Thus also does Scripture say, (Psalms 22:2) "My God, my God (אלי,אלי) why hast Thou forsaken me?" — for surely one would not say to the attribute of stern Justice "why hast Thou forsaken me?"! Thus have I found in the Mechilta d'Rabbi Yishmael 15:2:2.
ארך אפים SLOW TO ANGER — He defers (מאריך) His anger and does not hasten to punish — it may be that the sinner will repent.
ורב חסד AND ABUNDANT IN MERCY — to those who need mercy because they have not sufficient merits to be saved by them.
ואמת AND TRUTH — faithfully rewarding those who perform His will.

Verse 7

נצר חסד means God keeps (stores up) the mercy which a person does in His presence,
לאלפים TO THOUSANDS — to two thousand generations (the plural, "generations", and "two" is the least that this can imply; cf. Rashi on Exodus 20:6).
עונות — These are sins committed presumptuously (with premeditation).
פשעים — These are sins committed rebelliously.
ונקה לא ינקה AND WHO WILL BY NO MEANS CLEAR THE GUILTY — According to its plain sense this means that He is not altogether indulgent to sin (He does not entirely remit the punishment), but little by little exacts punishment from, him (the sinner). Our Rabbis, however, have explained: ונקה, And he clears — He clears those who repent, לא ינקה, He does not clear — but does not clear those who will not repent (Yoma 86a).
פקד עון אבות על בנים VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN — when they retain in their hands (follow the example of) the evil doings of their ancestors. This must be the meaning because in another verse of a similar character it has already been stated: of them that hate Me (cf. Exodus 20:5: Visiting the iniquity of fathers upon the children, upon the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me (Berakhot 7a; Sanhedrin 27b).
ועל רבעים means AND UPON THE FOURTH GENERATION — It follows, therefore, that the measure of good (reward) is greater than the measure of punishment in the proportion of one to five hundred, for in respect to the measure of good it says: "Keeping mercy for thousands" (two thousands at least) (cf. Rashi above: Tosefta Sotah 4:1; see also Rashi on Exodus 20:5).

Verse 8

וימהר משה, AND MOSES MADE HASTE — When Moses saw that the Shechinah passed by and heard the sound of the proclamation he immediately prostrated himself.

Verse 9

ילך נא אדני בקרבנו LET MY LORD, I PRAY THEE, GO AMONG US as Thou hast promised (cf. Exodus 33:14), since Thou forgivest iniquity. And even if it be a stiff-necked people and they have rebelled against Thee and Thou

didst on that account say, (Exodus 30:3) "lest I consume thee in the way" — yet pardon Thou our iniquity etc. — כי is sometimes used in place of (in the sense of) אם, "if".
ונחלתנו. AND TAKE US FOR THINE INHERITANCE — make us a special inheritance unto Thyself. This is the same request as that contained in (Exodus 33:16) "that we should be different, I and thy people [from all other peoples]" — which means that You should not let Your Shechinah rest upon the other peoples of the world (cf. Rashi on this verse).

Verse 10

כרת ברית [BEHOLD, I] MAKE A COVENANT about this.
אעשה נפלאת — The word נפלאת is an expression of the same meaning as ונפלינו (Exodus 33:16; so that the phrase means: I will make a difference) meaning that you shall be different in this respect from all other peoples — in that My Shechinah will not rest upon them.

Verse 11

את האמרי וגו׳ THE AMORITE etc. — There are only six nations mentioned here, because the seventh, the Girgashites, arose and emigrated of their own accord (Leviticus Rabbah 17:6; cf. Rashi on Exodus 33:2).

Verse 12

Verse 13

אשריו — An אשרה was a tree which they worshipped.

Verse 14

קנא שמו WHOSE NAME IS קנא — Who is zealous (מקנא) to exact punishment from the sinners and is not indulgent towards idolatry. This (the above) is always the meaning of the root קנא wherever it is used in connection with God. Consequently קנא שמו His name (His characteristic) is קַנָּא that of a zealot, implies: He maintains (insists upon) his superiority over other gods, and punishes His enemies (those who worship idols).

Verse 15

ואכלת מזבחו AND THOU EAT OF HIS SACRIFICE — You might perhaps think that there is no punishable offence in eating of it, this is not so, but I will account it unto you as though you consent to his idolatrous worship because through this (through partaking of his meals) you will be induced to take your daughters unto your sons (cf. Avodah Zarah 8a).

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

חדש האביב THE MONTH OF ABIB — the month of early ripening — the month when the grain is in its first stage of ripening.

Verse 19

כל פטר רחם לי EVERY FIRST OFFSPRING OF THE WOMB IS MINE amongst human beings,
וכל מקנך וגו׳ AND also ALL THY CATTLE WHICH IT (the mother animal) BRINGS FORTH AS MALE BY AN OX OR AN ASS OPENING its womb: it means, that a male animal opens her womb.
פטר is an expression denoting "opening"; similar is (Proverbs 17:14) "As if one openeth (letteth run) (פוטר) water so is the beginning of strife". The ת of תזכר expresses the feminine gender and refers to the animal in labour (i. e. the prefix is 3rd fem. sing., not 2nd masc. sing.: the subject to תזכר must be supplied "the mother animal").

Verse 20

ופטר חמור AND THE FIRST OFFSPRING OF AN ASS [THOU SHALT REDEEM] — but not that of any other unclean animal (Bekhorot 5b).
תפדה בשה THOU SHALT REDEEM WITH A LAMB — one gives a lamb to the priest and it remains in his possession with the character of a non-holy object (חולין — an ordinary animal). The firstborn ass is then permitted to the owner to be used for work (Bekhorot 9b).
וערפתו THEN THOU SHALT BREAK ITS NECK — one breaks its neck with a hatchet and so slays it (Bekhorot 10b). The reason is: he (the owner of the ass) has caused loss to the possessions of the priest (by not giving him the lamb) therefore must he suffer loss in his possessions (Mekhilta).
כל בכור בניך תפדה ALL THE FIRSTBORN OF THY SONS THOU SHALT REDEEM — Five Sela'im are the ransom fixed for him, as it is said (Numbers 18:16) "And those that are to be redeemed, from a month old shalt thou redeem [according to thy valuation, for the money of five shekels]". (For the whole of this verse cf. Rashi on 13:13).
ולא יראו פני ריקם AND NONE SHALL APEAR BEFORE ME EMPTY — According to the plain sense of the verse this is an independent statement and does not refer to the firstborn just mentioned — because in connection with the command concerning the firstborn there is no duty of appearing before the Lord; but it is another (a separate) prohibition merely connected by a conjunctive ו with the former statement and means: when you go up to the festival gathering to Jerusalem to appear before the Lord, none shall appear before Me empty; it is your duty to bring the burnt offering prescribed for the appearance before My face (Chagigah 7a). According to the Halachic explanation of the Boraitha this portion of the verse is redundant (since the same commandment already appears Exodus 23:15) and is consequently "free" (מופנה) to be used for a גז"ש (an analogy based on verbal similarity in two texts, viz., the word ריקם here and in the text Deuteronomy 15:13 לא תשלחנו ריקם "thou shalt not let him go away ריקם") — it is repeated here after the law about the first born to teach you that the outfit given to a Hebrew slave when he leaves your service should consist of five Sela'im-worth of each of the things (mentioned Deuteronomy 15:14: thy sheep, thy threshing floor, and vinepress) just as the ransom of the firstborn is five Sela'im. Thus are we taught in Treatise Kiddushin 17a.

Verse 21

בחריש ובקציר IN PLOUGHING TIME AND IN HARVEST [THOU SHALT LEAVE OFF] — Why are ploughing and harvesting specially mentioned (since all work is forbidden on Sabbath)? There are some of our Rabbis who say that this refers to ploughing in the year preceding the Sabbatical year which ploughing passeth into (produces its first fruits in) the seventh year

and to harvesting grain that has reached one-third of its maturity during the Sabbatical year which harvesting actually goeth forth into (takes place in) the eighth year, that following the Sabbatical year; and that this statement is intended to teach you that one must add part of the secular time to the holy time (i. e. that one must apply to a certain period before the beginning and after the termination of the Sabbatical year the laws applicable to that year in order to prevent its desecration). Thus, the following is what it (this verse) means: "Six days thou mayest work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest"; but even with regard to the six days' work which I have permitted you there are years when ploughing and harvesting are forbidden. This must be the meaning, referring to ploughing in the sixth year and harvesting in the seventh, and it cannot refer to the seventh year itself for it is unnecessary to make any mention of ploughing and harvesting in the seventh year being forbidden, for it is already said (Leviticus 25:4) "[But in the seventh year …] thou shalt neither sow thy field [nor prune thine vineyard]"! Others, however, hold that Scripture in this part of the text, is only speaking of the ordinary Sabbath day, as in the first part, and ploughing and harvesting which are specially mentioned in it as being forbidden on the Sabbath are mentioned to suggest to you the following: What is the characteristic of ploughing? It is an optional act (no such work being commanded anywhere in the Law)! So, too, is harvesting forbidden on Sabbath only when it constitutes an optional act! There is, therefore, excluded the harvesting of the barley for the "Omer" (cf. Leviticus 23:10: ye shall reap the harvest thereof) which is obligatory and which therefore supersedes the Sabbath (occasions a suspension of the Sabbath laws) (Rosh Hashanah 9a).

Verse 22

בכורי קציר חטים [THE FESTIVAL] OF THE FIRST OF THE WHEAT HARVEST — It is so called because on it you offer the two loaves of wheat (Leviticus 23:17).
בכורי OF THE FIRST [OF THE WHEAT HARVEST] — It is so called because it (the offering of the two loaves) is the first meal offering which is brought in the Temple of the new wheat crop; for the meal offering of the Omer which had already been brought on Passover was of barley (Menachot 84a).
וחג האסיף AND THE FESTIVAL OF INGATHERING — the festival that falls at the time of the year when you gather in thy produce from the field into the barns. The word אסף here means bringing in (and not, collecting), as (Deuteronomy 22:2) "thou shalt gather it (ואספתו) into thine house" (cf. Rashi on Exodus 23:16 and on Genesis 49:29).
תקופת השנה lit., [THE FESTIVAL …] THE YEARS CIRCUIT — i. e. the festival at the coming round of the year — at the beginning of the coming (the new) year.
תקופת is a term denoting going round.

Verse 23

כל זכורך means all the males among you (cf. Rashi on Exodus 23:17 and the note thereon). — Many precepts of the Torah are stated and then repeated, aye, some of them three times and even four (this section, for instance, is, with a few alterations, identical with the contents of chapter Exodus 23:12—19) in order to declare him who infringes them guilty and to punish him for each of the number of prohibitions which are connected with them and for each of the number of positive commands which are connected with them.

Verse 24

אורישׁ means as the Targum has it אתריך, I will drive out. Similar is (Deuteronomy 2:31) "Begin to drive out (רש)"; and similar is, (Numbers 21:32) "and drove out (ויורש) the Amorites" — all having the sense of expelling.
והרחבתי את גבלך [I WILL DRIVE OUT THE NATIONS BEFORE THEE] AND ENLARGE THY BOUNDARIES — and consequently you may be far from the Chosen House (the Temple) and you will then not be able to appear before Me continually; therefore I appoint for you these three seasons.

Verse 25

לא תשחט וגו׳ THOU SHALT NOT OFFER [THE BLOOD OF MY SACRIFICE TOGETHER WITH LEAVEN] — i. e. thou shalt not kill the Passover lamb whilst leaven is still existent in your possession. This is an admonition addressed to him who slaughters the Passover lamb, as well as to him who sprinkles its blood or to one of the members of the party formed to eat that lamb in company (Pesachim 63a).
ולא ילין NEITHER SHALL [THE SACRIFICE OF THE FESTIVAL OF PASSOVER] REMAIN OVER NIGHT — Understand this as the Targum renders it: ולא יבותון... בר ממדבחא … "There shall not remain overnight away from the altar till the morning the fat of the sacrifice" — this law of leaving the fat away from the altar overnight does not serve to invaliditate the sacrifice if it has been placed on the top of the altar some time during the night, even if it be not entirely burnt by morning, nor is the law about leaving the fat overnight infringed except if it has not been placed on the altar by the dawn of the morning (but any time during the night one may lift it up from the pavement on to the altar (Zevachim 87a; cf. Rashi on Exodus 23:18).
זבח חג הפסח means the pieces of its fat (which had to be burnt on the altar). From here you may derive the law concerning all cases of burning the pieces of fat and the limbs of sacrifices (i. e. you may derive the general rule regarding all sacrifices).

Verse 26

ראשית בכורי אדמתך THE FIRST OF THE FIRST-FRUITS OF THY GROUND [THOU SHALT BRING INTO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD THY GOD] — but only from the seven kinds of produce which are mentioned as an excellency of thy land (Deuteronomy 8:8) "a land of wheat and barley and vines etc (Mishnah Bikkurim 1:3). The דבש mentioned in this verse is date honey (not that of bees).
לא תבשל גדי THOU SHALT NOT SEETHE A KID [IN ITS MOTHER'S MILK] — This is a prohibition to mix meat with milk. This is written three times in the Torah: once to prohibit the eating of such mixture, once to prohibit us from deriving any other benefit (besides eating) from it and once to prohibit the cooking of it (Chullin 115b; cf. Rashi on Exodus 23:19).
גדי A KID — Any tender young animal is comprehended under the term גדי, a calf and a lamb also. From the fact that the writer felt it necessary to state specifically in several passages "a kid of the goat" you may learn that the term גדי without further definition implies any suckling (young animal) (Chullin 113a; cf. Rashi on Exodus 23:19).
בחלב אמו IN THE MOTHER'S MILK — A fowl is therefore really excluded from this law since it has no milk; for the prohibition regarding it (using it with milk) is not a Biblical law but only an enactment of the Soferim (Chullin 113a).

Verse 27

את הדברים האלה [WRITE THOU] THESE WORDS — These words, but you are not permitted to write down the "Oral Law" (Gittin 60b).

Verse 28

Verse 29

ויהי ברדת משה AND IT CAME TO PASS WHEN MOSES WENT DOWN [FROM MOUNT SINAI] — when he brought the second tablets on the Day of Atonement.
כי קרן עור פניו THAT THE SKIN OF HIS FACE BEAMED — קרן is an expression connected with the word קרנים "horns", and the phrase, קרן אור, the light-"horned", is used here because light radiates from a point and projects Like a horn. And whence was Moses privileged to have the rays of glory? Our Rabbis said that they originated at the time when he was in the cave, for the Holy One, blessed be He, then put His hand upon his face, as it is said, (Exodus 33:22) "And I will shelter thee with My hand" (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 37).

Verse 30

ויראו מגשת אליו AND THEY WERE AFRAID TO STEP NIGH UNTO HIM — Come and see how great is the power (influence) of sin! For before they streched forth their hand to sin what does Scripture say? (Exodus 24:17) "And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel", — and yet they were not afraid and did not tremble! But after they made the golden calf they recoiled and trembled even at the sight of the rays of glory of Moses! (Sifrei Bamidbar 1:8)

Verse 31

הנשאים בעדה THE PRINCES IN THE CONGREGATION — is the same as the more usual expression נשיאי העדה, the princes of the congregation.
וידבר משה אלהם AND MOSES SPOKE TO THEM the message of the Almighty. This whole section (i. e. all the verbs in it) denotes frequentative action (thus וידבר means "Moses used to say", ויקרא meant "He used to call", נגשו means "they used to come near" etc).

Verse 32

ואחרי כן נגשו AND AFTERWARDS [THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL] STEPPED NIGH — After he (Moses) had taught the elders he used again to teach the section or the single Halacha in question to the Israelites. The Rabbis have taught: How was the system of teaching? Moses used to learn the law from the mouth of the Almighty; Aaron entered and Moses taught him his lesson. Now Aaron moved away and took his seat to the left of Moses. Then his (Aaron's) sons entered and Moses taught them their lesson. They moved away and Eleazar took his seat to the right of Moses, whilst Ithamar sat down at Aaron's left. The elders then entered and Moses taught them their lesson. The elders moved away and took their seat at the side. Finally the whole people entered and Moses taught them their lesson. Consequently what was taught came into the possession of the whole people once, into the possession of the elders twice, into the possession of Aaron's sons thrice and into Aaron's possession four times etc. — as it is stated in Eruvin 54b.

Verse 33

ויתן על פניו מסוה AND HE PUT A VEIL ON HIS FACE — Render it (מסוה) as the Targum does: בית אפי, a cover for his face. מסוה is an Aramaic expression

(from the root סוי, "to look"). It occurs in the Talmud (Ketubot 62b) "her heart perceived (סוי), and again in Ketubot 60a "הוה קא מסוה לאפה", where מסוה is an expression for looking: "he looked into her face", i. e. he gazed at her. Here, too, מסוה denotes a cloth that was put in front of the face and of the region of the eyes. And out of reverence for the "rays of glory" — that not everybody should feast himself on them — Moses used to put the veil in front of them (the eyes), but took it off during the time when he spoke to Israel, and during the time when the Omnipresent conversed with him until the moment when he was going out and also when he went out he went out without the veil.

Verse 34

ודבר אל בני ישראל … וראו AND HE SPOKE UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL… AND THEY SAW the rays of glory on his face; and when he moved away from them...

Verse 35

והשיב משה את המסוה על פניו עד באו לדבר אתו MOSES REPLACED THE VEIL UPON HIS FACE UNTIL HE CAME IN TO SPEAK WITH HIM — but when he came in to speak with Him he took it off his face.

Chapter 35

Verse 1

ויקהל משה AND MOSES ASSEMBLED [ALL THE CONGREGATION OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL] — on the morrow after the Day of Atonement when he came down from the mountain. It (the word ויקהל) is used in the verbal form that expresses the idea of causing a thing to be done, because one does not actually assemble people with one's hands, but they are assembled by his command. The Targum therefore should be ואכנישׁ (not וכנשׁ as some editions have).

Verse 2

ששת ימים SIX DAYS [MAY WORK BE DONE] — He intentionally mentioned to them the prohibition in reference to the Sabbath before the command about the building of the Tabernacle in order to intimate that it does not set aside (supersede) the Sabbath (cf. Mekhilta).

Verse 3

לא תבערו אש YE SHALL NOT KINDLE A FIRE [THROUGHOUT YOUR HABITATIONS ON THEE SABBATH DAY] — There are some of our Rabbis who say that the law about kindling fire is singled out (more lit., goes forth from the general proposition; i. e. it is specially mentioned here although it is included in לא תעשה כל מלאכה, the law prohibiting all work on Sabbath) in order to constitute it a mere negative command (thus indicating that, like all other negative commands, its infringement is punishable by lashes but does not make the offender liable to death as does the doing of other work on Sabbath). Others, however, say that it was singled out in order to separate the various kinds of work comprised in the term כל מלאכה (thus indicating that each transgression of the Sabbath law is to be atoned for separately if several of them have been committed at the same time and under the same circumstances) (cf. Shabbat 70a; Yevamot 6b; Sanhedrin 35b; cf. also Pesachim 5b).

Verse 4

זה הדבר אשר צוה ה׳ THIS IS THE THING WHICH THE LORD COMMANDED me, לאמר TO TELL you.

Verse 5

נדיב לבו [WHOSOEVER] IS OF A WILLING HEART — Because his heart prompts one to generosity, he is called נדיב לב, one who is prompted to generosity by the heart. I have already explained the various materials which formed the contribution towards the Tabernacle and the work done for it in the passages where the commands about them were given.

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

את המשכן THE TABERNACLE — The lower curtains which were visible within the building are called משכן.
את אהלו ITS TENT — this is the covering of goats' skins which was made to serve as a roofing.
ואת מכסהו AND ITS COVERING — the covering of rams' skins and tachash skins.

Verse 12

ואת פרכת המסך means THE CURTAIN OF (that serves for) PARTITIONING — Everything that screens an object, whether it hangs above or in front of it is called מָסָךְ or סָכַךְ. Of similar meaning are: (Job 1:10) "[Hast Thou not] put a partition in front of him?" (שכת = סכת); (Hosea 2:8) "Behold I will partition off (סך = שך) thy way [with thorns]".

Verse 13

לחם הפנים THE SHOW BREAD — I have already explained (Exodus 25:29) that it was so called because it had two faces turning in this direction and in that, because it was made like a case open on two sides.

Verse 14

ואת כליה AND ITS VESSELS — the tongs and snuff-dishes.

נרתיה ITS LAMPS — luces in old French — bowls into which the oil and the wicks were placed.
ואת שמן המאר AND THE OIL ALSO FOR THE LIGHT — This also required wise-hearted men for preparing it (and therefore Scripture mentions it also after its statement v. 10 "And every wise hearted man … shall make…"), for it was different from other oils, as it is explained in Menachot 86a: he lets it (the olive) ripen on the top of the olive-tree etc. and thus it (the oil) is "beaten and yet clear" as Scripture prescribes (Exodus 27:20).

Verse 15

מסך הפתח THE SCREEN FOR THE ENTRANCE — the curtain that was in front of the east side of the Tabernacle, for there were neither boards nor curtains there.

Verse 16

Verse 17

את עמדיו ואת אדניה ITS COLUMNS AND ITS SOCKETS — עמדיו has a masculine and אדניה a feminine suffix; thus חצר is here used as (lit., called) masculine and feminine noun. Similar it is with many things (cf. Rashi on Genesis 32:9).
ואת מסך שער החצר AND THE SCREEN FOR THE GATE OF THE ENCLOSURE — the curtain which was hanging on the east side covering the twenty middle cubits in the width of the enclosure which latter was fifty cubits wide. Of this fifteen cubits on the north side were closed by hangings and so, too, on the south side, as it is said, (Exodus 27:14, 15) "The hangings of one side of the gate shall be fifteen cubits … [and on the other side shall be hangings fifteen cubits]".

Verse 18

יתדת THE PINS — in order to insert them into the ground and to fasten thereby the edges of the curtains that they should not be moved about by the wind.
מיתריהם THEIR CORDS to bind with.

Verse 19

בגדי השרד THE KNITTED GARMENTS — to cover up the Ark, the table, the candelabrum and the altars at the time of removing and packing up the articles in the Tabernacle when they set out on their journeyings.

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

על הנשים means with the women and closely following them.
חח is a circular golden ornament placed upon the arm; it is the צמיד which is often mentioned in Scripture (cf. e. g., Numbers 31:50).

כומז was a golden ornament worn by the women upon their private parts, Our Rabbis explain the name כומז as [an acrostic]: כַּאן מְקוֹם זִמָּה, [meaning] here is the place of licentiousness. (cf. Shabbat 64a).

Verse 23

וכל איש אשר נמצא אתו AND EVERY MAN WITH WHOM WAS FOUND blue purple, or red purple, or crimson, or rams' skins, or tachash skins — all of them brought whatever they had.

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

טוו את העזים [AND THE WOMEN] SPUN THE GOATS' HAIR (lit., the goats) — This required extraordinary skill, for they spun it (the goats' hair) from off the backs of the goats (whilst it was still on the living animals) (Shabbat 99a).

Verse 27

והנשאם הביאו AND THE PRINCES BROUGHT [ONYX STONES] R. Nathan asked, "What reason had the princes to give their contributions at the dedication of the altar (Numbers 7:12ff.) first of all the people, whereas at the work of the Tabernacle they were not the first, but the last to contribute?" But — replied he — the princes spoke thus: "Let the community in general contribute all they with to give and what will then be lacking we shall supply" But when the community gave everything needed in its entirety — as it is said, (Exodus 36:7) "For the stuff they had was enough [for all the work to make it, and some was left]" — the princes asked, "What can we now do?" therefore הביאו את אבני השהם וגו׳ THEY BROUGHT THE ONYX STONES etc. That is why they were the first to contribute at the consecration of the altar. Because, however, they were dilatory at the beginning, a letter is missing here from their title (thus intimating that something, viz., zeal was lacking in them): for it is written והנשאם instead of והנשיאים (Numbers Rabbah 12:16).

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

חור HUR was the son the Miriam (Sotah 11b; cf. Rashi on Exodus 24:14).

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

Verse 34

ואהליאב AND OHOLIAB — he was of the tribe of Dan, of one of the lowest of the tribes, of the sons of the handmaids, and yet the Omnipresent placed him with regard to the work of the Tabernacle on a level with Bezalel although he was a member of one of the noble tribes (Judah)! in order to confirm what Scripture says, (Job 34:19) "He regardeth not the rich more than the poor" (Midrash Tanchuma 2:10:13).

Chapter 36

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

מדי העבדה means more than is sufficient for the needs of the work.

Verse 6

ויכלא is an expression for withholding.

Verse 7

והמלאכה היתה דים (lit., and the work was their sufficiency — was enough for them — for all the work) — this means the work of contributing was the sufficiency of (was enough for) the workers at the Tabernacle, for all the work connected with the Tabernacle to make it and even to leave some over.
והותר is an infinitive similar to, (Exodus 8:11) "[But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite] he allowed his heart to be hardened (והכבד)"; (2 Kings 3:24) "and they smote (והכות) Moab" (infinitives used in perfect sense).

Chapter 37

Verse 1

וישׂ בצלאל AND BEZALEL MADE [THE ARK] — Because he gave himself over to the work more whole-heartedly than the other wise men it is called after his name (his name alone is associated with the act) (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayakhel 10).

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

Chapter 38

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

נבוב לחות HOLLOW WITH TABLETS — נבוב signifies hollow, similar to, (Jeremiah 52:21) "And the thickness thereof was four fingers: it was hollow (נבוב)".
נבוב לחת — The word נבוב being in the construct state and subordinate to לחות the meaning of the verse is: He made it (the altar) out of the hollow space formed by the tablets i. e. the planks of Shittim wood mentioned in v. 1 were oil all sides and the hollow space in the middle (thus the hollow space itself — which was filled with earth — formed the altar. Unlike the golden altar it had no roof; cf. Rashi on Exodus 27:8).

Verse 8

במראת הצבאת OF THE MIRRORS OF THE WOMEN CROWDING — The Israelitish women possessed mirrors of copper into which they used to look when they adorned themselves. Even these did they not hesitate to bring as a contribution towards the Tabernacle. Now Moses was about to reject them since they were made to pander to their vanity, but the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, "Accept them; these are dearer to Me than all the other contributions, because through them the women reared those huge hosts in Egypt!" For when their husbands were tired through the crushing labour they used to bring them food and drink and induced them to eat. Then they would take the mirrors, and each gazed at herself in her mirror together with her husband, saying endearingly to him, "See, I am handsomer than you!" Thus they awakened their husbands' affection and subsequently became the mothers of many children, at it is said, (Song 8:5) "I awakened thy love under the apple-tree", (referring to the fields where the men worked). This is what it refers to when it states, מראות הצבאת "the mirrors of the women who reared the hosts (צבאות)" (Midrash Tanchuma, Pekudei 9). And it was for this reason that the laver was made of them (the mirrors) — because it served the purpose of promoting peace between man and wife viz., by giving of its waters to be drunk by a woman whose husband had shown himself jealous of her and who nevertheless had associated with another (cf. Numbers ch. V) thus affording her an opportunity to prove her innocence (cf. Sotah 15b). You may know that the מראות mentioned in the text were really mirrors (and that the word does

not mean visions, or appearance, etc.), for it is said, (v. 29) "And the copper of the wave-offering was seventy talents etc. … and therewith he made [the sockets etc.]" — the laver, however, and its base are not mentioned there amongst the articles made from that copper; hence you may learn that the copper of which the laver was made was not a part of the copper of the weave-offering, which is the only copper mentioned as having been contributed by the people. Thus did R. Tanchuma 2:11:9 explain the term מראת הצבאת. And so does Onkelos also render it: במחזית נשיא, and this first word is the Targum translation of מראות, in the sense of mireors in old French, for we find that for the word (Isaiah 3:23) "And the גליונים", which are mirrors, we have in the Targum the same word מחזיתא.
אשר צבאו [THE WOMEN] WHO CAME IN CROWDS to bring their contribution.

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

לעמת קלעי החצר [AND THE SCREEN…] ANSWERING TO THE HANGINGS OF THE ENCLOSURE — i. e. according to the measure of the height of the hangings of the enclosure.

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

אלה פקודי THESE ARE THE SUMS [OF THE TABERNCLE] — In this section are enumerated all the weights of the metals given as a contribution for the Tabernacle, of silver, gold and copper, and also there are enumerated the vessels used for every kind of service in it.
המשכן משכן OF THE TABERNACLE, EVEN OF THE TABERNACLE — The word משכן is mentioned here twice in allusion to the Temple that was taken in pledge (משכן) — as it were — (as a security for Israel's repentance) by being twice destroyed for Israel's iniquities (Midrash Tanchuma, Pekudei 5).
משכן העדת THE TABERNACLE OF THE TESTIMONY — The Tabernacle was a testimony to Israel that God had shown Himself indulgent to them in respect to the incident of the golden calf, for through the Temple He made His Shechinah dwell amongst them (Midrash Tanchuma, Pekudei 6).
עבדת הלוים THE SERVICE OF THE LEVITES — The things in the Tabernacle which were counted and its vessels constituted the service entrusted to the Levites in the wilderness — to carry them, to take them down and to set them up, each man according to the burden which was assigned to him, as is set forth in the section נשא (Numbers 4).
ביד איתמר BY THE HAND OF ITHAMAR — He was the officer appointed over them (the Levites) with the duty to hand over to each "house of the father" (בית אב) the service that devolved upon it.

Verse 22

ובצלאל בן אורי וגו׳ עשה את כל אשר צוה ה׳ את משה AND BEZALEEL THE SON OF URI etc. MADE ALL THAT THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES — It is not stated here: אשר עָוָּה (Bezaleel made all that he had been commanded), but "[Bezaleel made] all that the Lord commanded Moses" — even regarding such things which his teacher (Moses) did not tell him, his own opinion was in agreement with what had been told to Moses on Sinai (Jerusalem Talmud Peah 1:1; Bereishit Rabbah 1:14). [For Moses bade Bezaleel to make the vessels first and the Tabernacle afterwards but Bezaleel said to him: "Surely, it is the way of the world (the usual way) first to build a house and then to place the household utensils in it!" He (Moses) replied to him: "So, indeed, did I hear from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He". Moses further said to him: (בצלאל), you must have been sitting in the shadow of God (בצל אל), for certainly did thus God command me!" And consequently Bezaleel made the Tabernacle first and afterwards he made the vessels (cf. Berakhot 55a).

Verse 23

Verse 24

ככר [TWENTY NINE] TALENTS — A common kikkar contains sixty common manehs, and the maneh of the Sanctuary (that used for purposes connected with the Temple) was double the common maneh. Consequently the kikkar here mentioned was 120 common manehs. Now a common maneh contained 25 Sela'im (or shekels), and the kikkar of the Sanctuary equals three thousand shekels. That is why Scripture counts (mentions the number of) all the shekels that are fewer than 3,000 as a separate item, because these do not together amount to a kikkar (cf. Bekhorot 5a).

Verse 25

Verse 26

בקע (from בָּקַע to split) is the name given to a weight of half a shekel. לשש מאות אלף וגו׳ FOR SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND [AND THREE THOUSAND etc.] — Thus were the Israelites in number, and thus did their number amount to after the Tabernacle was set up, as it is stated in the Book of Numbers (ch. II), and at this time, also, when they contributed toward the Tabernacle they were just as many (cf. Rashi on Exodus 30:16). The half-shekels of 600,000 amount to a hundred talents, each talents consisting of three thousand shekels (cf. v. 25). How is this? 600,000 half-shekels are 300,000 whole shekels, making one hundred talents and the remaining 3550 half-shekels make 1775 whole shekels, as stated in the text.

Verse 27

לצקת means as the Targum has it: לאתכא, TO CAST.
את אדני הקדש THE SOCKETS OF THE SANCTUARY — i. e. of the boards of the Tabernacle (the Sanctuary) which were forty-eight boards, and for these ninety-six sockets were required. The sockets for the partition vail were four in number, so we have altogether one hundred. As regards all the other sockets (those of the enclosure and of the vail at its entrance) they are not taken into account here, because “copper” was written concerning them (Scripture prescribes that they were to be of copper).

Verse 28

וצפה ראשיהם [HE MADE HOOKS FOR THE COLUMNS] AND OVERLAID THEIR TOPS – the tops of the columns (not of the hooks) with them (the 1775 shekels of silver), for it is said with regard of all of them (the columns of the enclosure as well as of those of the vail at the entrance) (v. 19) “and the overlaying of their chapiters and their fillets were of silver”.

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

Verse 34

Verse 35

Verse 36

Verse 37

Verse 38

Verse 39

Verse 40

Verse 41

Verse 42

Verse 43

Chapter 39

Verse 1

ומן התכלת והארגמן וגו׳ AND OF THE BLUE PURPLE AND OF THE RED PURPLE etc. — But there is no mention of linen here. From this fact I derive (cf. Rashi on Exodus 31:10) that these בגדי שרד mentioned here were not identical with the garments of the priests, for there was linen in the garments of the priests. But these were the cloths with which they covered up the holy vessels at the time of removing and packing up the articles in the Tabernacle when they set out on their journeyings which indeed had no linen in them.

Verse 2

Verse 3

ויקעו AND THEY DID EXTEND — ויקעו is of the same root and meaning as, (Psalms 136:6) "To Him that stretcheth out (לרקע) the earth". Render ויקעו as the Targum does: ורדידו, they extended by beating. Plates did

they beat out of the gold; in old French estendre — to extend into thin plates. Here it informs you how they wove the gold together with the woollen threads. They beat out the thin plates and from them they cut threads along the length of the plates to make of these threads a mixture (to mix them) with each of the different kind of woolen threads in the ephod and the breast-plate in regard to which gold is mentioned in this connection. One thread of gold they intertwined with six threads of blue purple, and so with each kind of wool. For all the materials had their threads six-fold, and the gold formed the seventh with each of them (cf. Yoma 72a).

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

ואת פארי המגבעות means the beauty of the high caps — this is equivalent to: the beautiful high caps.

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

לתת על המצנפת מלמעלה TO FASTEN IT ON HIGH UPON THE MITRE — and by means of the threads he placed it on the mitre as though it were a kind of crown. It is, however, impossible to say that לתת על המצנפת means to put the plate on the mitre, for in the Treatise on the Slaughter of the Sacrifices (Zevachim 19a) we learn: His (the High Priest's) hair was visible between the plate and the mitre, whereon he placed the Tephillin". Now the plate rested on his forehead (cf. Exodus 28:38), consequently the mitre was above (on the crown of the head) and the plate beneath (on the forehead). What then can be the meaning of "to fasten it on high upon the mitre"? Besides, I have put another question about this: here it says, "and they put upon it (the plate) a thread of blue purple" and in the section where the command is given it states, (Exodus 28:37) "And thou shalt put it on a blue purple string" (so that the plate was above the thread, not beneath it as is here commanded). I therefore say that this פתיל of blue purple mentioned here was not an ornament but threads by which to tie it (the plate) on the mitre. For the plate reached only from one ear to the other, so with what could they tie it to his forehead? So blue purple threads were attached to it at its (the plate's) two ends and on the middle by means of which they tied it on and hung it on the mitre whenever this was on his head. There were two threads on each end (of the plate) one on its upper side and the other underneath, on the side next to the forehead and so also at the middle of it (the plate) — because in this way it was easy to tie it on. Since, however, the way of tying a thing on is by not less than two threads the text is justified in saying both, (Exodus 23:37) "[And thou shalt put it] on a blue purple thread" and here "and they put upon it a thread of blue purple". He (the High Priest) tied both ends of all of them (of all the threads) together behind him on his neck, and thus placed it (the plate) on the mitre. Do not be puzzled because it does not say "threads of blue purple" seeing that there were many (three double threads altogether), for we find the same thing in the case of the breast-plate and the ephod: (Exodus 28:28) "And they shall fasten the breast-plate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod … with a string (and not with strings) of blue purple" and you must admit that there could not have been less than two strings, for at the two ends of the breast-plate were the two rings of the breast-plate and on the two shoulder-pieces of the ephod were the two rings of the ephod opposite to them. Now according to the way the breast-plate was tied on there were four threads, and under any circumstances with less than two it would have been impossible to tie it on, and yet Scripture speaks of "a string" of blue purple.

Verse 32

ויעשו בני ישראל AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL MADE the work ככל אשר צוה ה' וגו׳ ACCORDING TO ALL THAT THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES [SO DID THEY] or [SO THEY MADE IT].

Verse 33

ויביאו את המשכן וגו׳ AND THEY BROUGHT THE TABERNACLE [UNTO MOSES etc.], for they themselves were unable to erect it. Since Moses had done no work in the Mishkan, the Holy One, blessed is He, left for him the task of erecting it, for nobody was able to set it up because of the weight of the boards which no human strength was capable of setting up. Moses, however, succeeded in placing it in position. Moses said to the Holy One, blessed be He, "How is its erection possible by human beings?" God answered him: "You be busy with your hand!" He appeared to be erecting it, but in fact it set itself up and rose of its own accord. That is why

Scripture says, (Exodus 40:17) “The Tabernacle was erected (הוקם)” — was erected by itself. This is a Midrash of Rabbi Tanchuma 2:11:11.

Verse 34

Verse 35

Verse 36

Verse 37

Verse 38

Verse 39

Verse 40

Verse 41

Verse 42

Verse 43

וירבך אתם משה AND MOSES BLESSED THEM — He said to them “May it be the will of God that His Shechinah rest upon the work of your hands; ‘and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us’” (Psalms 90:17.) (Sifra, Shemini, Mechilta d'Miluim 2 15) This (from ויהי נועם onward) is part of one of the eleven Psalms (90—100) that are in the section beginning with, תפלה למשה; (Numbers Rabbah 12:9).

Chapter 40

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

וסכת על הארן means AND THOU SHALT SCREEN THE ARK — וסכת denotes screening and it is the correct term to use, for it (the veil) formed a partition (cf. Rashi on Exodus 35:12).

Verse 4

וערכת את ערכו AND SET ITS ROWS — the two piles of the show-bread.

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

ויפרש את האהל AND HE SPREAD THE TENT The אהל is the curtains of goats' skins.

Verse 20

את העדות THE TESTIMONY — the Tablets.

Verse 21

Verse 22

על ירך המשכן צפנה UPON THE SIDE OF THE DWELLING NORTHWARD — i. e. in the northern half of the width of the house (not by the northern wall) (Yoma 33b).
ירך — This must be understood at the Targum renderd it: צדא. The real meaning is "thigh", but the side of anything is just like the thigh which is at a person's side.

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

ויקטר עליו קטרת AND HE CAUSED THE INCENSE OF AROMATICS TO ASCEND UPON IT in the morning and in the evening, as it is said, (Exodus 30:7, 8) "[And Aaron shall cause incense of aromatics to ascend thereon in fumes] every morning when he trimmeth the lamps, [and when he trimmeth the lamps at even etc.]".

Verse 28

Verse 29

ויעל עליו וגו׳ AND OFFERED UPON IT etc. Not only during the first seven days of the consecration of Aaron and his sons during which Moses set the dwelling up and then dismantled it, but also on the eighth day of the consecration which was the day of the final erection of the dwelling for its ordinary purposes did Moses officiate and offer the congregational sacrifices except those which had been commanded exclusively for that very day, as it is said, (Leviticus 9:7) "[And Moses said to Aaron], approach unto the altar and offer etc.
את העלה THE BURNT OFFERING — the daily burnt offering.
ואת המנחה AND THE MEAL OFFERING — The meal offering brought together with the libation which was made with the daily burnt offering, at it is said, (Exodus 29:40) "[And with the one lamb] (of the daily burnt offering) shall be brought a tenth deal of flour mingled with … oil; [and the fourth part of a hin of wine for a libation …]".

Verse 30

Verse 31

ורחצו ממנו משה ואהרן AND MOSES AND AARON [AND HIS SONS] LAVED [THEIR HANDS] — On the eighth day of the consecration all of them mentioned here, including Moses, were alike in respect of the priestly office. The translation of ורחצו in the Targum should therefore be ומקדשין, and they were hallowing (i. e. they then hallowed their hands and their feet), for on that day Moses laved his hands together with them (Aaron and his sons).

Verse 32

ובקרבתם — This is equivalent to ובקרבם, and has an imperfect sense, the same as כשיקרבו. when they were approaching.

Verse 33

Verse 34

Verse 35

ולא יכל משה לבא אל אהל מועד AND MOSES WAS NOT ABLE TO COME INTO THE APPOINTED TENT — But another verse says, (Numbers 7:89) "And when Moses came into the appointed tent [to speak with Him then he heard the voice]"! There comes, however, a third verse and reconciles these apparently contradictory verses, for it says here כי שכן עליו הענן "For (or when) the cloud abode thereon (on the appointed tent)". Hence you may say: so long as the cloud was upon it "he was not able to come into the appointed tent", but as soon as the cloud disappeared he entered it and spoke with Him (Sifra, Braita d'Rabbi Yishmael 18).

Verse 36

Verse 37

Verse 38

לעיני כל בית ישראל בכל מסעיהם [THE CLOUD WAS ON THE TABERNACLE] … IN THE SIGHT OF ALL THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL, THROUGHOUT ALL THEIR JOURNEYS — At every מסע which they made (according to Rashi this means: at every station at which they stopped) the cloud rested upon the Tabernacle in the place where they encamped. A place where they encamped is also called מסע (the literal meaning of which is "journey"). Similar is, (Genesis 13:3) "And he went on to his resting places (למסעיו)" (cf. Rashi on this verse); similar also is, (Numbers 33:1) "These are the מסעי" — "the places of encampment". Because from the place of encampment they always set out again on a new journey therefore all the different stages of their journeys (including the places where they encamped) are called מסעות.